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**Thinking About Escaping Poverty:**  
**A Critical Argument Analysis Identifying the**  
**Conceptualisation of Constraints to Poverty Reduction**  
**Implicit in the**  
**Johannesburg Human Development Strategy**

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**A Minor Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements**  
**for the Award of the Degree of**  
**Masters of Philosophy in**  
**Politics, Philosophy and Economics**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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### **Abstract:**

This dissertation asks the research question: “How does the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy conceptualise the constraints that exist to escaping poverty?”

It answers the question by adopting a critical approach to the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy (JHDS). Using an argument analysis methodology, the dissertation ascertains what assumptions about constraints to poverty reduction are implicit within the strategy. The dissertation shows the JHDS to emphasise livelihood asset deficiencies as the most significant constraint to poverty reduction. Several non-asset constraints are also recognised, including inappropriate livelihood goals and strategies on the one hand, and inhibitive structures and processes on the other. The dissertation uses these assumptions to locate the strategy on a spectrum of explanations for what constrains poverty reduction, ranging from individualist to structuralist positions. The strategy favours an individualist position on poverty reduction constraints. It does, however, recognise both individualist and structuralist constraints. The analysis also highlights several poverty reduction constraints that are ignored by the strategy.

## **Glossary**

BHS	Basic Household Services
CoJ	City of Johannesburg
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
HCBC	Home Community Based Care
IGP	Income Generation Programme
JHDS	Johannesburg Human Development Strategy
KC	Key Claim
PWP	Public Works Programme
PRPs	Poverty Reduction Programmes
SHS	Sustainable Human Settlements
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
SS	Social Security

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## **Chapter One: The Question**

### **1.1 The Research Question**

'How does the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy conceptualise the constraints that exist to escaping poverty?'

Poverty is a problem. There are factors that cause poverty and there are others that constrain or prevent the poor from escaping poverty. This dissertation will not comment on the actual causes of poverty. Nor will it investigate the effective constraints to poverty reduction. It rather seeks to identify the ways in which constraints have been constructed in a particular poverty reduction intervention. This dissertation focuses on the constructions informing a local poverty reduction strategy: the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy<sup>1</sup>. More specifically, the research question posed by this thesis asks about how the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy conceptualises the constraints that exist to escaping poverty.

#### **1.1.1 The Intervention**

The Corporate Planning Unit in the Office of the City Manager drafted a human development strategy in order to address the social problems of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in Johannesburg (JHDS, 2005:3). The Johannesburg Human Development Strategy (JHDS) received endorsement in 2005 by both the political and the official arms of the City<sup>2</sup>. The strategy has been presented to the people of Johannesburg as the City's "commitment to the poor" (JHDS, 2005: Title) and forms one element of the City's plans for its future. It is complemented by an economic strategy, 'Joburg 2030', and an environmental strategy, the 'Environmental Management Framework' (JHDS, 2005:14). Together, these three strategies provide the City with a roadmap to achieving sustainable development, a principle adopted as an outcome of the 2003/2004 Integrated Development Planning process (CoJ, 2003a). The common vision of these strategies is to move Johannesburg toward its goal of being a "world class African city for all" (CoJ, 2002; JHDS, 2005:4).

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<sup>1</sup> This strategy can be found through the City's website or directly at [http://www.joburg-archive.co.za/city\\_vision/hr\\_strategy-05.pdf](http://www.joburg-archive.co.za/city_vision/hr_strategy-05.pdf). The original strategy released to the public in 2005 continues to be the first and only version of the document in use at the time of writing this dissertation. This strategy was presented as a medium-term strategy valid until the year 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The word city will be used to refer to the geographic jurisdiction while the use of the word City will denote the institutional body of the local government.



For the purposes of this dissertation, the term 'intervention' will be used to refer to any set of actions taken to reduce poverty. This could be in the form of a project, a programme, a strategy, a policy or even a social agenda comprised of a suite of policies aimed at addressing the problem of poverty. The primary usage of the term, however, will be in relation to the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy and its component poverty reduction programmes<sup>3</sup>. This dissertation categorises these component interventions into six types, namely social security, public works programmes, income generating programmes, basic household services, sustainable human settlement interventions and other poverty reducing interventions. The strategy and its component interventions will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

### 1.1.2 Livelihood Assets

Assets have become an increasingly important element in the contemporary poverty discourse (WDR 00/01; Bebbington, 1999; Barrett et al, 2006; Carter and Barrett, 2004; Scoones, 1998; Carney, 1998; Moser, 1998). This dissertation will repeatedly refer to assets in its analyses. It is thus important to specify at the outset what is meant by the term. The assets referred to in this dissertation are the five key livelihood assets as they are specified by DFID in its Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (DFID: Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets)<sup>4</sup>. These five assets are financial<sup>5</sup>, physical<sup>6</sup>, human<sup>7</sup>, social<sup>8</sup> and natural<sup>9</sup> assets. The dissertation refers to assets and capital interchangeably.

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<sup>3</sup> The justification for treating this human development strategy as a poverty reduction intervention will be discussed in chapter three.

<sup>4</sup> While the broad classifications employed by theorists are similar, there is often a slight disparity between the detailed definitions employed. For instance, there is not agreement on whether financial capital is a form of physical capital or not. This dissertation addresses these as two distinct forms of capital. There have also been certain categorisations that refer to productive capital as opposed to physical capital (for instance in Barrett et, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Financial capital includes both available stocks and the financial resources provided from other sources including banks.

<sup>6</sup> Physical capital is understood by DFID to include both infrastructure and services available to people. It also includes tools and machinery that assist people in producing goods and fashioning their livelihoods.

<sup>7</sup> The two major elements of human capital are a person's health and their skill set or knowledge-related capabilities.

<sup>8</sup> Social capital refers to networks and relationships between people. These networks are thought to provide people with a valuable resource. The concept of social capital has been popularised in recent academic work by Robert Putnam (1993; 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Natural capital refers to those natural resources upon which people can draw.

### **1.1.3 Constraints and Causes**

This thesis focuses on the way in which constraints to poverty reduction have been implicitly constructed in the JHDS. While there may often be a relationship between those factors that cause poverty and those that constrain poverty reduction, it is important to recognise the distinction between the two concepts. Causation is concerned with the various reasons why a condition came about. A focus on constraints looks rather at the factors preventing an emergence from the condition. The importance of the distinction is that it is possible for people to escape from poverty using means that are not related to the original cause of their poverty, as shown by Bane and Ellwood in their seminal work on the dynamics of poverty spells (1986, 13-21; also discussed in Krishna, 2003).

There is a scarcity of literature specifically discussing the different constraints to poverty reduction. This dissertation thus draws upon the various causal views on poverty and reinterprets them in constraints terms. In doing so, the author assumes that the spectrum of causal explanations reviewed in the literature below could equally be applied to discussions about constraints.

## **1.2 Answering the Question**

This dissertation will answer the research question with reference to a spectrum of explanations for poverty reduction constraints, ranging from individualist to structuralist. While attributional studies have often been used to identify explanations of poverty according to such a spectrum, this dissertation will employ an alternative approach to answering the question. It will draw on the logical argument analysis methodology suggested by the critical policy analysis literature.

Sections 1.4 and 1.5 of this chapter will review the attributional and critical policy literatures and will motivate for the approach adopted in this thesis. Before doing so the author will argue for the significance of the research question posed.

## **1.3 The Significance of the Question**

The value of asking a question about conceptualisation relates to the way in which one's thinking affects one's actions and behaviours (Kraus 1995; discussed in Cozzarelli, Wilkinson and Tagler, 2001; also assumed in Mitroff and Emshoff, 1979 in

their discussion on policy-related assumptions). Given this relationship, it follows that poverty reduction interventions are more likely to be inappropriate if based on flawed analyses of the problem of constraints. Moreover, inappropriate interventions are likely to be less effective in achieving the desired impact of poverty reduction. In other words, the conceptualisation of constraints to poverty reduction is important because of its likely influence on the impact of anti-poverty interventions<sup>10</sup>.

In the poverty field, several prominent poverty scholars have recognised the significance of the underlying conceptualisation of poverty. They have argued that the choice of anti-poverty policy is driven by the way in which poverty is defined and understood (Kanbur and Squire, 1999; Lok-Dessallien, 2001; Aliber, 2003)<sup>11</sup>. Differences in the conceptualisation of poverty lead to differences in policy formulation and application. For instance, when poverty was understood primarily in income and consumption terms then the types of solutions appropriate were most commonly conceived in terms of improved economic welfare and economic growth (discussed in Kanbur and Squire, 1999; Lok-Dessallien, 2001). When Sen introduced his capabilities approach as a multi-dimensional theory of the condition (1981, 1984; discussed in Clark, 2006; Saith, 2001), a broader set of interventions became relevant to addressing poverty reduction. Subsequent theories, such as those emanating from participatory studies undertaken by Narayan et al (1999) have also resulted in a shifting focus to include interventions addressing vulnerability, voicelessness, social and political exclusion, and powerlessness (discussed in Kanbur and Squire, 1999; WDR 00/01; Green and Hulme, 2004).

Assumptions made about what inhibits people from escaping poverty must also influence which specific interventions are incorporated into a poverty reduction strategy. Different interventions are deemed appropriate depending on what type of constraints are recognised. The importance of one's views on constraints to one's choice of intervention can be illustrated with reference to the debate on welfare. While some view welfare as a legitimate anti-poverty device (for example, Epsing-Anderson, 1990; Kenworthy, 1999; Seekings, 2007), others view welfare itself as one

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<sup>10</sup> There are, of course, other factors that influence the impact of an intervention. This dissertation is confining itself to a discussion on the conceptualisation.

<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, a feedback mechanism has also been acknowledged, where the choice of anti-poverty policy has been seen to have the ability to change, restructure and recreate not only the phenomenon but also the way in which the phenomenon of poverty is understood (Alcock, 1997:5; Meadows, 1998:19).

of the constraints to poverty reduction and thus an inappropriate intervention (for example Murray, 1984; Butler and Kondratas, 1987; Lee, 1987; Moffitt, 1992).

#### **1.4 Framing the Question in the Literature**

The task of establishing the thinking about causes of poverty has traditionally fallen into the domain of attributional studies. This dissertation asks a similar question to the one asked in the attributional literature but with a focus on constraints. The author proposes the use of an alternative approach to answering the research question. The dissertation will draw upon the critical policy analysis literature to inform the proposed approach to answering the question. This section of the chapter frames the question by reviewing the attributional literature as well as the literature on the individualist-structuralist spectrum. The following section will explore and justify the approach proposed to answering the question.

Perceptions studies, of which attributional studies are an example, have traditionally been employed when seeking to establish the thinking on how poverty is conceived. Such studies, often undertaken in the psychology discipline, focus their attention on how a subject thinks and claims to think about a problem. Examples of such studies include two key South African poverty-related perception studies: the South African Participatory Poverty Appraisal or SA-PPA (discussed in May 1998) and a study capturing elite perceptions of poverty in South Africa (Kalati and Manor in Reis and Moore, 2005). Attributional studies, a subset within the perceptions studies literature, focus specifically on the issue of how people explain poverty (eg. Feagin, 1972 and 1975; Furnham, 1982; Kluegel and Smith 1986, Smith and Stone, 1989, Hunt 1996; Gilens, 1999, and Cozzarelli et al, 2001). These studies seek to explain why different people hold different views on the causes of poverty. Studies differentiate between respondents and their explanations with reference to antecedents such as race (eg. Hunt, 1996; Kluegel and Smith 1986), class (eg. Feagin, 1972), beliefs (eg. Cozzarelli et al, 2001), and political ideology (eg. Kluegel and Smith 1986, Zucker and Weiner, 1993).

Most attributional studies offer the subjects of their study a set of positions from which to choose. For instance, in Feagin's seminal work (1972) three explanations for poverty were suggested: fatalism, individualism and structuralism. In coming to such a palette of positions explaining poverty, attributional studies have both drawn from and contributed to a second set of literature that directly debates the various

explanations of poverty. Generally these have ranged from individual to structural<sup>12</sup>. Theorists from economic, political, sociological, psychological and even anthropological disciplines<sup>13</sup> have debated these explanations for decades.

On the one hand, several theorists have explained poverty in terms of individual deficiencies (Murray, 1984; Ricketts and Sawhill, 1988; Moynihan, 1965). Some of these theories have focused on deviant behaviours and social pathologies that exist amongst the poor. Such theories have understood the poor to be less motivated and possess a lower work ethic. The poor are also characterised as being more likely to become addicted and have more children, often out of wedlock and at a younger age (Murray, 1984; Maynard, 1997; Boisjoly, Harris and Duncan, 1998; discussed in Pearl, 1970). Others are less pejorative, but continue to view poverty in terms of individual characteristics such as human capital deficiencies or physical disabilities (Karoly, 2001; Rankin and Quane, 2000; Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998).

Such explanations have been extrapolated upon by the literature that attributes deficiencies not only to individuals but also to families and cultures. For instance, the ideas of a culture of poverty (made famous by Lewis, 1968) and an intergenerational cycle of dependency (Murray, 1984) have been referenced repeatedly in debates about poverty. These explanations tend toward the individualist position and have most often been associated with a more conservative view on poverty (as discussed in Gans, 1995)<sup>14</sup>.

In opposition to the individualist view, there are many theorists who understand poverty in structural terms. Such theories rather explain poverty as a function of the environment or structure in which it develops. There are a number of theorists who present such arguments, showing poverty to be the result of economic, political and social structures (economic: Rank et al, 2003; Gore, 2003; Milanovic, 2003; Schram, 1995; socio-political: Gans, 1995; Massey, 1996; Feagin, 2000; Ferguson, 1999; Wilson, 1987, Illiffe, 1987; Bracking, 2003; Carr in Carr and Sloan, 2003). These

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<sup>12</sup> This dissertation will not engage with fatalist explanations, as these have not been taken as seriously in most of the literature. In addition, due to the fact that the strategy has suggested interventions to address poverty, it can be argued that a fatalistic approach is less likely. However, if the outcomes do indicate fatalism to be an important explanatory factor, this position can be accommodated on the spectrum of views being suggested in this review.

<sup>13</sup> This dissertation has chosen to approach the question in an interdisciplinary manner. Such an approach is in keeping with the nature of the degree for which the dissertation is written, namely a Masters of Philosophy degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (MPhil PPE).

<sup>14</sup> While this view is less popular amongst academics, it has been viewed as credible by many policymakers (discussed in O'Connor, 2001).

theories often object to much of the individualist literature that makes an exception of the poor as persons in some way fundamentally different from the rest of society. Where any differences are recognised, these theorists explain them as the symptom not the cause of poverty.

Recently several theorists have argued against the idea of explaining poverty according to these two dichotomous positions. The two positions have, for instance, been shown to be compatible both by theorists focusing on poverty and by those focussing on perceptions of poverty (compatible explanations: eg. Rank, 2004; compatible perceptions: eg. Wilson, 1996; Hunt, 1996). Others have highlighted the fact that the distinction between the two schools is not always clear-cut. To illustrate, certain deficiencies, such as human capital deficiencies, have been cited by both individualists and structuralists. Some individualists explain human capital deficiencies in terms of the work ethic and value systems of the poor (Murray, 1984). Structuralists have used the same set of deficiencies to point to discrimination in the distribution of educational opportunities (Moreira in Carr and Sloan, 2003; Lott, 2002; Loury, 1977). Similarly, both schools of thought have referred to the idea of an 'underclass' in their explanations of poverty, where the term is understood to have different connotations (individualists: Ricketts and Sawhill, 1988; Moore, Livermore and Galland, 1973, discussed in Gans, 1995; structuralists: Field, 1989; Seekings, 2000; discussed in Alcock, 1997).

This author recognises such critiques of the debate between these various positions. A discussion of the legitimacy of this debate would be the task of another dissertation. This dissertation confines itself to discussing conceptualisations in the context of the spectrum as it applies to constraints. This critique of the spectrum is arguably more applicable to causal exercises than to constraints-related ones. The former seek to identify the root causes of a condition. It is thus a significant critique of the dichotomy if it could be shown that there is a complex relationship between these positions, for instance if structural causes underlie individual causes. Where these positions are rather being used to inform a discussion on constraints, such a criticism is arguably less serious. This dissertation seeks not to identify the root constraint, but rather the critical constraint. In doing so, it assumes that the JHDS has chosen its various interventions in order to address the perceived critical constraints, either

directly or indirectly<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, in recognition of the critique this author has explicitly conceived of, and presented, the various positions according to a spectrum and not a dichotomy.

### **1.5 Approaches to Answering the Question**

This dissertation will adopt a critical approach to answering the research question. In particular, it will make use of a logical argument analysis methodology. This section of the chapter will begin by motivating why the dissertation does not take a conventional attributional approach to answering the question. It will then locate the chosen approach within the critical policy analysis literature.

This dissertation can be understood to ask a question similar to that typically asked by attributional studies, namely that of how the subject of a study has constructed the problem of poverty. Attributional methodologies, including social surveys, interviews, and focus groups, seek to establish the conceptions of poverty informing the views of different types of people. Its focus on the views of individuals, however, has been one of the major criticisms of this attributional literature<sup>16</sup> (criticisms reviewed in Harper, 1996).

For the purposes of this dissertation an attributional methodology is insufficient both in so far as it is not designed to accommodate questions around organisational thinking and in so far as it is not able to capture the thinking implicit within a policy document or text. Even if these studies were to capture the views of key policymakers, this would at best record the individual conceptions and problem analyses that serve as inputs to the policymaking process. This dissertation is interested rather in the conceptualisation implicit in the output of the policymaking process, namely the strategy document itself. Thus, while attributional studies have been important in embedding an understanding of the significance of the research question in the author, they have not been used as a model on which to base the approach employed to answering the question.

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<sup>15</sup> This assumption will be discussed further in the section entitled 'The Good Faith Approach' in chapter two.

<sup>16</sup> David Harper noted one of the most ironic criticisms of attributional literature is that it seems to have committed a "fundamental attribution error" where its focus on individuals seems to over-emphasise the importance of the views of individuals with respect to diagnosing and solving poverty (Ross, 1977; discussed by Harper in Carr and Sloan, 2003). In addition the notion that individuals hold unitary and consistent ideas about a problem has been disputed (Harper, 1996).

Given the limitations of the conventional approach to answering the research question, an alternative methodology needs to be employed. In his critique of attributional studies, David Harper (1996) suggested the use of critical discourse analysis to answer a similar question. Such critical approaches would be able to answer the question posed in this dissertation in so far as they are able to uncover the organisational thinking implicit within policy texts. This thesis will turn its focus to relevant critical literatures in order to investigate whether and how they could be used to answer the research question.

Critical theorists recognise that factors such as culture, class, ethnicity, race, power and ideology reflect themselves in texts as well as in actions and speech acts (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1981; Habermas, 1984; Fairclough, 1989). Critical discourse analyses look beyond the manifest content of a text in order to determine the underlying assumptions and conceptualisations on which it is based. The text is reinterpreted as a means through which the powerful perpetuate or maintain an existing social structure and power distribution (discussed in van Dijk, 1985; Jupp and Norton, 1993; Mills, 2004).

This dissertation will not undertake a formal critical discourse analysis. In analysing the dynamics of how power functions in and through texts, discourse theorists are committing themselves to a more structuralist position. Adopting such a methodology in this dissertation is controversial in so far as the approach may prejudice and discount the possible relevance of individualist explanations. This paper will rather identify the conceptualisation of constraints within the JHDS without imposing a preconceived understanding of the importance of power-related structures onto its findings. Yet, while the thesis does not provide a formal critical discourse analysis, it does draw on the non-positivist traditions of such a critical approach. This dissertation is informed by the critical approach in so far as it looks at the implicit conceptualisations on which the policy text is founded. The critical approach has also influenced this dissertation in its decision to focus not only on those conceptualisations implicitly proposed in the JHDS but also on those omitted. This is a special feature of the Foucauldian school of discourse analysis. Foucault argued that, to understand the implicit conceptualisation informing a text, it is equally important to demonstrate how a text has not defined and explained a phenomenon as it is to show how it has done so (discussed in Jupp and Norton, 1993; Howarth, 2000; Foucault, 1981).



Having studied the JHDS, the author proposes that a logical argument approach could be used to uncover constraints-related conceptualisations<sup>17</sup>. A similar logical approach has been applied to critical analyses of policy in the past in the form of the 'argumentative turn' in policy analysis and planning literature (Fischer, 1985, 1990, 1998, 2003; Dunn, 1981, 1993; Forester and Fischer, 1993; Mitroff and Emshoff, 1979). This author proposes the use of such an argument analysis approach to answering the dissertation's research question.

The argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning literature is a form of critical policy analysis that was developed in response to the failures of both positivism and post-positivism (Dryzek in Fischer and Forester, 1993; Dunn, 1993; reviewed in Marston, 2004)<sup>18</sup>. Argumentative policy analysts recognise the limitations of positivist knowledge and its claims to 'objective' techniques and 'value-free' perspectives (Fischer 1985, 1990 and Fischer, 1998 discussing neo-positivism; Marston, 2004). Their critical approach rather acknowledges the importance of context in influencing policy and policy analyses. However, critical policy theorists also seek to avoid the relativism associated with post-positivist approaches to truth and certainty (Dunn, 1993; discussed in Marston, 2004). They propose that, through the use of argument, their approach is able to overcome the limitations of positivist reasoning as well as the threat of post-positivist relativism (Dryzek in Fischer and Forester, 1993; Dunn, 1993; reviewed in Marston, 2004).

The argumentative approach characterises policy as an argument. Where policy is seen as an argument, critical policy theorists propose that reforms are more realistically justified with reference to persuasion than to truth or certainty (Dunn, 1993; persuasion also discussed in Majone, 1989). Policymaking has thus been recast as a "contest over ideas" and a "negotiation between competing interests" (contest of ideas discussed in Dalton et al 1996 quoted in Marston, 2004:22; competing interests discussed in Hill, 1993; quote from Marston, 2004:22,

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<sup>17</sup> Initially the author based her preference for a logical approach on the work of Korten (1987, 1990), McCord (2004, 2005), Du Toit (2004), Nattrass (2006) and Seekings (2007). These authors, in evaluating different poverty reduction interventions, referred to various hidden assumptions on which the interventions were based. These authors did not make use of a formal logical framework in such analyses, and this accounts for the author's subsequent reference to the critical policy literature.

<sup>18</sup> The argumentative approach is one of a number of policy analysis responses to post-positivism, including other critical and post-structuralists approaches (discussed in Marston, 2004:15-33).

respectively). In this way, critical policy analysts are able to include and negotiated between the multiple and context-driven frames of reference influencing policy analyses (Dunn, 1981; 1993)<sup>19</sup>.

Logical argument analysis is an appropriate policy analysis technique where policy is an argument, and policy analysis a persuasive exercise negotiating between competing interests (as described in Dunn, 1993; Fischer, 1985, 1990; Mitroff and Emshoff, 1979; Hambrick, 1974). Most argumentative theorists cite Stephen Toulmin's logical framework (1958) as a means of appraising and allowing debate between different perspectives in the process of arbitrating between knowledge claims and policy arguments (Dunn, 1981, 1993; Fischer, 1985, 1990; Mason, Mitroff, and Barabba, 1982; Mason and Mitroff, 1981; Ball, 1994).

This dissertation will draw upon the use of logical argument analysis in so far as it has been presented as a tool by which one can "raise to a level of explicit consciousness those unexamined prior assumptions" (quoted in Dunn, 1993:262). In adopting the logical argument analysis methodology to identify the constraints conceptualisation, this dissertation could be understood as taking the first step towards a critical policy analysis, such as the analyses suggested by Dunn, Fischer, and Mitroff and Emshoff (1981, 1993; 1985, 1990; 1979; respectively). The dissertation is not characterised as performing a complete critical analysis because it does not intend to explore reasons why certain assumptions have been made, or issues of how these assumptions reflect the context. Neither does the conclusion explicitly aim to promote "emancipatory policy reform" as is characteristic of critical policy analyses (quoted in Dunn, 1993:284). It seeks only to identify the conceptualisation of constraints to poverty reduction implicit in the strategy<sup>20</sup>.

## 1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter one of the dissertation has established the key question and its significance. It located the question and the approach to answering the question within the literature. Details of the logical methodology to be employed will be provided in

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<sup>19</sup> It was been argued that an informal critical analysis of argumentation is well suited to a more democratic policy process. The argumentative approach has often been associated with arguments for communicative, discursive or deliberative approaches to democratising policy analysis (Forester, 1993; Dryzek in Fischer and Forester, 1993; Healey, in Fischer and Forester, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> While underlying political and ideological informants will not be discussed in this paper, this topic could be taken further in subsequent studies.

chapter two. The Johannesburg Human Development Strategy and its role in the dissertation will be outlined in chapter three. Chapters four and five will be dedicated to the logical analysis of the strategy. The former will focus on identifying assumptions about constraints to poverty reduction implicit in the strategy, while the latter will explore the trends and implications of these assumptions in order to determine the underlying conceptualisations. The dissertation will be concluded with a chapter that not only draws together the main findings of the analysis, but also allows the author a chance to identify topics for further study.

### **Concluding Statement**

This dissertation adopts a critical approach to the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy with a view to identifying the strategy's assumptions on what constrains the poor from escaping poverty. It does so by means of a logical argument analysis of a policy text, where this analysis is concerned with ascertaining what assumptions about constraints inform the strategy. The dissertation uses these assumptions to locate the strategy on an individualist-structuralist constraints spectrum.

## **Chapter Two: The Methodology**

This dissertation will identify the thinking about constraints to poverty reduction that inform the JHDS. It does so by identifying a set of assumptions about constraints that are logically entailed within the strategy. Having deconstructed the strategy into a set of assumptions, it will explore what these assumptions imply about the conceptualisation of constraints that informs the strategy. This chapter will explore in more depth the methodological approach employed. It will also look at the limitations of the approach.

### **2.1 The Methodological Approach**

This dissertation bases its logical argument analysis methodology on Toulmin's logical framework (1958). This framework has been proposed as appropriate for policy analysis by the argumentative school of critical policy theorists. This section of the chapter will introduce Toulmin's approach. It then outlines this dissertation's proposed methodology showing how it both draws on and deviates from Toulmin's approach.

#### **2.1.1 Toulmin's Logical Framework**

Stephen Toulmin wrote 'The Uses of Argument' in 1958 as a contribution to the debate about logic and argument analysis. His logical framework has subsequently been widely cited across a variety of disciplines including communications theory and discourse analysis (Brockriede and Ehninger, 1960; Hart, 1973; Clark, 1979; also discussed in Toulmin in the preface to the updated edition of his book, 2003:vii-viii), mathematics (Aberdein, 2005), computer supported argument visualisation (Horn, 1989 and Toulmin: ICAIL discussed in Buckingham-Shum, 2003) and offender profiling (Alison et al, 2003). In the critical policy literature reviewed in chapter one, Toulmin's argument analysis framework was presented as a way in which to analyse policy as argument.

Toulmin's work was presented as a critique of the classical logical syllogism (Toulmin, 1958). It proposed that the classical forms of argument analysis mask the complexity between statements that each serve a different function in the argument (1958:1-10). His suggestion was that arguments be analysed not according to major and minor premises and conclusions, as is traditionally the case, but rather according



### **2.1.2 This Dissertation's Methodology**

The methodology undertaken by this dissertation is divided into two parts, a logical analysis phase and a reconstruction phase. The logical analysis phase will apply argument analysis techniques to the strategy in order to identify a set of implicit assumptions about constraints to poverty reduction. The reconstruction phase will then interpret these assumptions with reference to a sustainable livelihoods framework. This framework enables the author to translate the assumptions into a picture of how the strategy has constructed constraints.

The first part of the methodology, the logical analysis phase, draws upon Toulmin's framework. Given the output required to answer this dissertation's question, Toulmin's framework is unnecessarily complex. There have also been criticisms of Toulmin's schema, questioning the distinctions between several of his concepts, in particular his notions of data, warrants and backing (Gross, 1984; Hamble, 1977; Cooley, 1959; Cowan, 1964). In analysing the JHDS, this dissertation will conflate Toulmin's six concepts into three as a means of avoiding these criticisms and reducing unnecessary complexity. In other words, this dissertation will analyse the strategy according to 'claims', 'assumptions' and 'statements of status'. Claims are understood in the same way as presented by Toulmin. Assumptions in this paper will refer to any support provided for the claims including Toulmin's data, warrants and backing. The statement of status will note the conditions under which assumptions apply. In some ways these capture Toulmin's qualifiers and rebuttals, although in practice the statements of status could be seen as opposite to rebuttals.

While logical analysis techniques have often been presented as certain and objective, the author recognises that the analysis undertaken in this dissertation will entail a significant degree of subjectivity. The analysis draws upon the creativity and judgment of the author in two ways: in the formulation of the claims and in the interpretation of these claims (creativity and judgment in logical analyses discussed in Scriven, 1976). With this in mind, the author recognises that the dissertation can neither be presented as the definitive work on the matter, nor can it claim to be objective. This author will strive toward reducing subjectivity in this regard, by standardising the formalisation and interpretation processes, as described below.

The JHDS does not contain formalised arguments or claims that stand ready for analysis, at least not in a structured form. The analysis will therefore need to identify

the claims before analysing them. This author recognises that the legitimacy of the approach depends upon the exact way in which these claims are formalised. This formalisation introduces the possibility of generating weaker than necessary claims for analysis. This would constitute a fallacy, namely the fallacy of the straw man (as discussed in Tindale, 2007). The author will avoid this fallacy by formalising the strategy's various interventions into a small set of simple claims. These claims will be formalised as described below. It is important, however, to state that the intention of the formalisation process is to create a set of claims that would not be contested by those who formulated the strategy. The analysis of these claims will also not focus on the exact wording of the statements, but rather on the ideas to which they point.

The claims will be formalised with reference to the objective of the intervention and the proposed activity or action suggested. This proposed method is best understood by way of illustration. If the intervention within the strategy was the provision of welfare grants, for instance, then the key claim implicit in this intervention could be formalised in the following way:

Illustrative Claim:	If the poor are provided with welfare grants, then poverty will be reduced
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This method is founded on an assumption about the objective of the interventions listed in the JHDS, namely that the interventions are undertaken for poverty reduction purposes. Section 2.2 of this chapter on the 'Good Faith' approach will explore this assumption about objectives further.

Having established the key claim for each intervention suggested in the strategy, logical argument analysis can ensue. The dissertation will apply logical techniques as adapted from Toulmin's framework in order to uncover a set of assumptions that must have been made in support of the initial key claim.

Illustrative Claim:	If the poor are provided with welfare grants, then poverty will be reduced
Illustrative Assumption 1:	Welfare grants reduce poverty
Illustrative Assumption 2:	Poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of human capital

There are a number of assumptions that must necessarily have been made if the key claim is to be accepted, such as illustrative assumption 1. There will also be a

number of claims that could plausibly have been made, as with illustrative assumption 2. This further set of assumptions will depend on the way in which the intervention is interpreted.

The second area where a degree of judgement is employed is in one's interpretation of the intervention. Interventions may have been applied to address a constraint either directly or indirectly. An indirect approach would see the strategy addressing a condition that in turn is thought to be a direct constraint to poverty reduction. For example, both money metric and alternative poverty theorists prescribe interventions to enhance human capital through health and education measures. The alternative school does so because they understand the condition of poverty partially in terms of a lack of human capital (a conceptualisation made famous by Sen, 1981, 1984, 1999). This reflects a direct interpretation of the human capital constraint. Money metric theorists also view human capital as a constraint, but an indirect constraint. Human assets are instrumentally important in this view in so far as they contribute to greater growth and economic welfare (discussed in Kanbur and Squire, 1999; Lok-Dessallien, 2001)<sup>21</sup>.

One's interpretation will influence one's understanding of the strategy's constraints conceptualisations. In view of the fact that constraints can be interpreted differently even given the same intervention, it will be important to understand how the intervention intends to reduce poverty prior to identifying the implicit conceptualisations. The dissertation will make its choice on how to interpret an intervention with reference to the outcomes that the strategy anticipates the intervention to achieve. Where the strategy does not explicitly present these anticipated outcomes, other official documentation related to the intervention will be referred to.

The analysis will generate both a set of assumptions about constraints and a corresponding set of 'statements of status'. These statements of status indicate the certainty with which one can accept the outcomes of analysis. The outcomes of the analysis are subject to the suppositional assumption that the strategy is a poverty

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<sup>21</sup> There is no consistent relationship between one's conceptualisation of poverty and one's choice to interpret an intervention in a direct or indirect way. In other words, a direct interpretation of an intervention is sometimes best associated with a monetary view and sometimes with a non-monetary view. Similarly, an indirect interpretation of certain interventions can be associated with monetary conceptions while other interventions are best understood in terms of non-monetary perspectives when interpreted as instrumentally important for poverty reduction.



reduction strategy, as discussed further below in 2.2. Given this assumed objective, several assumptions uncovered through analysis will be presented as necessary. Others are rather shown to be conditional on an additional set of assumptions or interpretations, illustrated below. The statements of status specify under what conditions assumptions can be taken as necessary.

Illustrative Claim:	If the poor are provided with welfare grants, then poverty will be reduced
<u>Illustrative Statement of Status:</u>	<u>Necessary if the objective of the intervention is poverty reduction</u>
Illustrative Assumption 1:	Welfare grants reduce poverty
<u>Illustrative Statement of Status:</u>	<u>Necessary if welfare grants are poverty reducing through an investment in human capital as indicated in strategy (JHDS, 2005:85)</u>
Illustrative Assumption 2:	Poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of human capital

The second part to the methodology requires that the list of assumptions uncovered in chapter four be reconstructed into a picture of how constraints are understood. Chapter five will translate the list of assumptions into a set of positions on the individualist-structuralist spectrum discussed in chapter one. To do so, chapter five will make use of a poverty-related framework, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Chambers and Conway, 1992; Scoones, 1998; Carney, 1998; Moser, 1998; and Bebbington, 1999, Ashley and Carney, 1999).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach will serve two purposes. It will classify assumptions into a number of types of explanation according to categories used in the framework, namely the vulnerability context, livelihood assets, transforming structures and processes, livelihood strategies and livelihood goals<sup>22</sup>. Classifying assumptions according to this theory enables the author to systematically identify trends between the assumptions. The theory will also be used to highlight those ideas about constraints that have been omitted or rejected. Having classified assumptions according to the framework, the various explanations will be read in terms of the constraints spectrum in order to reconstruct the underlying conceptualisation of constraints informing the strategy.

<sup>22</sup> These categories are described in chapter five.

## 2.2 The Good Faith Approach

This dissertation accepts at face value the stated objective<sup>23</sup> of the strategy, namely poverty reduction<sup>24</sup>. This is done in order to formalise the claims within the strategy. In doing so, this dissertation is looking at the strategy in its abstract form, and not as the product of a context. This section will describe the 'Good Faith' approach, argue for its value and explain the implications of the approach for the conclusion.

The arguments analysed in this strategy will be constructed around the claim that the interventions are designed to reduce poverty. In taking such an approach, the author assumes that the primary objective of the strategy is to reduce poverty. The paper thus ignores the political and institutional factors that influenced the formulation of the strategy, as well as possibly its objectives. In reality, this author recognises that the strategy is the output of a political process. It is certainly a negotiated compromise based on what was deemed feasible. It may even be informed by political goals not associated with poverty reduction. It is thus not true that the strategy's only objective is poverty reduction. In accepting the poverty reduction objective, this dissertation assumes away the external context important in influencing the strategy. Such a suppositional assumption is used in order to construct a philosophical thought experiment.

If the initial poverty reduction assumption made by the thought experiment is granted, then a set of arguments follow. These arguments are analysed for the purpose of extracting constraints related assumptions. These assumptions need not be accepted, if the original terms of the thought experiment were not accepted. This, however, presents officials with a dilemma: either accept the assumptions uncovered or concede that the strategy may not be seeking poverty reduction. If the assumptions seem to appear warranted, then officials will be presented with a relatively easy choice, although this option does not necessarily confirm that poverty reduction is the key objective contained within the strategy<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> The good faith approach takes the objective of the strategy at face value. It does not extend this face value acceptance to the explicit conceptualisations evident in the text of the strategy.

<sup>24</sup> Chapter three contains an argument justifying the use of poverty reduction and not human development as the key objective of the strategy.

<sup>25</sup> It would be fallacious to assume that, because the assumptions are founded, the objective must be poverty reduction. This is an example of an invalid argument form known as affirming the consequent.

On the other hand, if the assumptions or conceptualisations discovered seem to be unacceptable, for instance if they are based on unfounded assumptions, then this analysis of the problem could point to a misdiagnosis of the poverty problem. It could also, however, highlight questions about the thought experiment and the objective it posits onto the strategy. In other words, inappropriate assumptions might imply either a misunderstanding of the problem of constraints or a flawed assumption relating to the poverty reduction objective. This approach can therefore spark a debate on what objectives the strategy may be pursuing, a debate that will be briefly mentioned in the conclusion of the dissertation.

This approach appears to be in direct contrast to the approach taken by critical literatures where the context is highlighted. It need not be viewed in this way. Both approaches could use the external power-related context to explain the assumptions and conceptualisations uncovered. This would be the second step in a study, one that is not taken in this dissertation. This approach is different from critical approaches and critical discourse analyses in that it proposes a different way in which to identify assumptions. The critical approaches identify conceptualisations through referencing the external context. The Good Faith approach highlights conceptualisations without reference to anything outside of the strategy<sup>26</sup>. While it identifies constraints assumptions by looking directly at the internal context, it should also been seen as retaining the ability to inform a debate about the external context in the case that the assumptions uncovered are evaluated.

The value of this Good Faith approach can be understood in terms of its ability to enable the analysis of the strategy. It is, however, in the nature of this approach that the conclusions will be limited. Any assumptions or conceptualisations uncovered through this process are dependant on the suppositional assumption. The possibility that the thought experiment misrepresented the objective prevents this dissertation from conclusively ascribing the assumptions uncovered to the strategy. The conceptualisation uncovered will thus remain conditional on the assumption about the poverty reduction objective<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, if the conceptualisation and its

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<sup>26</sup> While the SLA theory is important in the methodology, it is used for classification purposes. It thus highlights trends and omissions that already exist amongst assumptions. Elements external to the strategy are not introduced through the SLA in that theory is not ascribed to or applied to the programme in order to make some statement about either the theory or the programme.

<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that, because of the constraints associated with this approach, the conclusion cannot ascribe the assumptions made in this paper to any one policymaker or the City as a whole. This is not a weakness, as the paper does not aim to uncover elite

assumptions can be shown to be unacceptable, then there are sufficient grounds to warrant a re-conceptualisation of the strategy, either in terms of its purported objectives or in terms of its component interventions<sup>28</sup>.

The last important point to note with regards to the Good Faith approach, relates to the way in which poverty reduction is being understood. This thesis assumes the strategy to be directed at the reduction of poverty. This, however, could be understood in terms of a reduction in incidence, depth or severity. Poverty theorists have conceived of three types of measures of poverty. Incidence measures show the number of people that fall below the poverty line, while depth is measured as the average distance that the poor fall below the poverty line (also known as the poverty gap). The severity measure tracks the average distance between poor people who fall below the line (explained further in Lipton and Ravallion, 1997; severity is also known as the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke P2 measure, named after its developers).

This paper takes poverty reduction to mean a reduction in the incidence of poverty in the long run. In different terms, this paper distinguishes between poverty eradication and reduction interventions, and those interventions that are rather concerned with alleviating or ameliorating the burden of poverty (a distinction discussed further by Henriot as noted in the Public Service Commission, 2007:15). This Good Faith approach assumes that the JHDS strives to move poor people out of poverty<sup>29</sup>.

There are two important caveats to this understanding of poverty reduction. Firstly, incidence focused approaches are often associated with poverty lines and money-metric understandings of poverty. The poverty reduction assumption adopted in this dissertation should not, however, be understood to preclude a non-monetary perspective on poverty. The good faith approach adopted can apply both to monetary and non-monetary interpretations of poverty, in so far as both perspectives assume there to be a point at which the poor can move beyond their poverty and become not

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perceptions of poverty, but rather assumptions informing the policy text.

<sup>28</sup> Both the poverty reduction assumption and the Good Faith approach will be discussed further in the conclusion to this dissertation.

<sup>29</sup> The strategy does not in fact take such a view on poverty reduction. It has a more nuanced objective in that it hopes both to reduce poverty permanently by providing new opportunities and to alleviate the condition through safety nets (JHDS, 2005; 86). For the purposes of this dissertation, the objective will be simplified as incidence reducing. This will be discussed further in the conclusion.

poor. How monetary or non-monetary theorists define this point is not the focus of this dissertation<sup>30</sup>.

Secondly, by assuming the strategy aims at reducing poverty in the incidence sense of the word, this paper might appear to be making a judgment on the worth of incidence reducing interventions as being better than those of depth and severity interventions. There is considerable debate on this issue at present since incidence targets, like the Millennium Development Goals, could encourage practitioners to focus first on the less poor as they are more easily brought out of poverty (Gaiha, 2003; Masset and White, 2004). This paper recognises that there are such risks in taking an incidence approach. It also recognises the importance of survivalist and depth-related interventions. It nevertheless takes the City of Johannesburg and the South African government at their word when they claim to strive for the reduction and eradication of poverty (South Africa's 2014 vision discussed in ANC, 2004; Mbeki, 2004).

### **2.3 Limitations of the Methodology**

The question asked in this dissertation focuses not on identifying the conceptions of poverty that inform the strategy, but rather on identifying the understandings of what constrains the poor from escaping poverty. This dissertation will not focus on the strategy's conceptualisations of poverty. Nevertheless, it is important at the outset of the analysis to be cognisant of the perspectives on poverty that informs both the strategy and the analysis. With respect to the analysis, it should be noted that, while this author is sympathetic to non-monetary conceptions of poverty, the dissertation does not impose a conception onto the analysis. Any imposition would distort the findings due to the way in which one's understanding of poverty influences one's subsequent understanding of the constraints to poverty reduction. Analysis of the strategy undertaken in chapter four and five shows its thinking about constraints to have been influenced both by a monetary and by a non-monetary conception of poverty.

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<sup>30</sup> The poverty reduction assumption could be seen to commit this paper to poverty line thinking, in that incidence would need to be measured according to some point or line, be it a monetary line or some other point that takes into account non-monetary ideas of what constitutes poverty. This author would rather not be committed to such thinking. It, however, will not focus on this issue. What point or line is denoted when discussing poverty reduction in terms of incidence, and whether a precise point can be denoted, will not be explored further in this thesis. The underlying assumption made in this thesis is that people can be in a position where they are considered not poor either in the monetary or in the non-monetary sense.

The second limitation relates to any assessment of the impact of the strategy. While it has been argued that the significance of the question can ultimately be understood in terms of the strategy's impact, the dissertation will not consider the issue of impact any further. The focus of the analysis undertaken in this dissertation is the identification of conceptualisations informing the strategy. The paper can thus be seen as an abstract, somewhat philosophical analysis of the intervention. This abstract nature also has an influence on the use of the term 'intervention'. Because of the approach taken to answering this question, the term intervention should be understood to refer not to an action undertaken but rather to a plan of action as presented in the strategy.

The output of the analysis undertaken in this dissertation will be a list of assumptions. To generate these assumptions each intervention will be looked at separately. A set of necessary assumptions will be generated through this exercise. It does not, however, translate that each assumption is also a sufficient indicator of the conceptualisation of constraints informing the strategy. All generated assumptions need to be viewed together for this analysis to provide a fair indication of how the JHDS has understood the constraints that exist to escaping poverty. Assumptions will be viewed together in this way during the analysis in chapter five.

Having identified a list of assumptions informing the JHDS, it is tempting to proceed with an assessment of whether these assumptions are founded or not. Constraints assumptions are identified for the purposes of reconstructing the implicit conceptualisation informing the strategy and not for evaluation purposes<sup>31</sup>. In order to comment on the foundedness of assumptions it would be necessary to undertake a detailed assessment of what does in fact constrain the poor from escaping poverty in addition to this analysis of what is assumed to do so. Such an evaluation is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, while it is not the primary feature of the analysis, this author will indicate where the assumptions are believed to be questionable or controversial<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> This dissertation offers its approach as a tool that can be used to evaluate appropriateness in future studies, discussed further in chapter six.

<sup>32</sup> Such indications will be made in the footnotes in chapter four whilst the analysis is being undertaken.

### **Chapter Three: The Johannesburg Human Development Strategy**

This dissertation logically analyses the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy (JHDS) in order to identify the conceptualisation of constraints on which it is based. This section of the dissertation will introduce the JHDS. It will first contextualise the strategy and discuss the role it plays in the thesis. The chapter will then detail the interventions contained within the strategy and unpack how they will be categorised for analysis.

#### **3.1 Contextualising the Strategy**

The JHDS was drafted in 2005 in response to an imperative for local government to become more involved in the project of development. While its developmental jurisdiction is somewhat restricted by national and provincial authorities, local government is obliged to play a significant role in the development of its residents (as seen in the White Paper on Local Government, 1998). The JHDS presents the City with a plan of action whereby it can fulfill the developmental mandate it has legally been ascribed.

This local strategy was not, however, designed in isolation. The JHDS is not only the result of a “City-driven” process (JHDS, 2005:20), but also the City’s response to a human development imperative that has been adopted by international, national and provincial bodies. The strategy has explicitly located itself within the context of the Millennium Development Goals and South Africa’s 2014 vision (JHDS, 2005; UN, 2007; ANC, 2004; Mbeki, 2004). Because this strategy has presented itself as a medium-term strategy valid until the year 2016, several important target dates fall within its remit. By implication it has committed itself to striving towards, amongst other things, the target of halving poverty by the year 2015 (or 2014 in the case of the Vision 2014).

The strategy intends to create an enabling environment wherein residents can realise their full potential and enlarge the set of choices they face (a goal derived from the UN definition of human development cited in JHDS, 2005:14). It has explicitly set itself the task of tackling poverty “head-on” in order to “change the status quo” (JHDS, 2005:12). The City has set itself this radical goal for a number of reasons. Firstly, a fundamental intervention is necessary in order to prevent a worsening of current social problems, thereby preventing further destabilisation of society in the city (JHDS, 2005, 12). The

City has also argued that these social problems must be addressed and reduced if the institution of the City is to remain financially sustainable and effective in its role as a provider of services (JHDS, 2005, 12). Thirdly, the strategy has linked improved equity to better economic growth (JHDS, 2005, 12); a position strongly endorsed in the current development discourse (for example Galor and Zeira, 1993; Alesina and Rodrik, 1994; Deininger and Squire, 1998; Bourguignon, 2003).

The strategy will inform future IDPs undertaken by the City as well as other social policies, programmes and projects in which the City engages. The strategy points the City in a direction and should be used to inform and underpin the philosophy of all future action taken by each City department as well as its utilities and agencies (JHDS, 2005:113).

### **3.2 The Role of the Strategy in the Dissertation**

#### **3.2.1 The Importance of the Strategy**

This paper will analyse the various interventions within the JHDS in order to highlight some of the implicit assumptions about the constraints that exist to escaping poverty. In a way this thesis could be understood to be a case study of the JHDS. However, rather than being understood as a traditional case study, the strategy is employed here as a tool to define the scope of the study. The question in this thesis could equally be asked of any other poverty intervention. The strategy is thus important in this dissertation not only for its role in providing the content for analysis, but also for its role in delimiting the scope of study.

#### **3.2.2 The Choice of the Strategy**

This author chose to analyse a strategy-intervention in response to an imperative to engage in meso-level analyses recently emphasised by poverty theorists<sup>33</sup> (Shepard and Hulme, 2003; Barrett and Swallow, 2005). Theorists have noted that different aspects of poverty are mutually reinforcing and interrelated (as argued in Sen, 1999; Kanbur and

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<sup>33</sup> Meso level analyses in this context focus on strategies and interventions bridging between micro (project and programme) and macro (social agenda) interventions.



Squire, 1999). Similarly, different poverty reduction interventions have an impact not only on poverty but also upon each other. For interventions to support one another, rather than work in isolation of, or in opposition to, one another, they must have been designed to achieve mutually supporting impacts. This explains the importance of developing poverty programmes and projects in the context of a broader strategy to address poverty. The meso-levelled approach to analysis is valuable in that it highlights not only the conceptualisation informing individual interventions but also what they together indicate about the constructions of poverty underlying the strategy.

The JHDS was chosen because it is one of very few explicitly outlined South African poverty strategies<sup>34</sup>. However, the choice of this particular case throws up an important point that requires clarification. The JHDS is a human development strategy. This paper is concerned with poverty and poverty reduction strategies. Yet poverty and development are not synonymous concepts. In some ways it would be more appropriate to conduct a study of assumptions about the obstacles to human development that are entailed within the strategy. This could conceivably be undertaken in another more comprehensive paper, as discussed in the conclusion. This dissertation, however, focuses only on poverty assumptions and treats the JHDS as a poverty reduction strategy. This requires some justification.

The JHDS can arguably be interpreted as presenting itself as a poverty reduction strategy, especially where poverty is understood in a broader, non-monetary sense. A close reading of the strategy seems to highlight poverty as the strategy's key concern. Not only was the strategy drafted as a response to poverty in the city, but its key function was also to tackle the challenge of poverty "head on" (JHDS, 2005:12). The full title of the strategy emphasises the poverty focus where the strategy is named the 'Human Development Strategy: Joburg's Commitment to the Poor'.

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<sup>34</sup> Johannesburg was the first of a very small number of cities that have explicitly expressed their various poverty reduction programmes (PRPs) in the form of an overarching strategy, Cape Town being another notable example (CoCT, 2006). It has also been argued that there is a conspicuous lack of any expressed national or provincial strategy on poverty with the Free State standing as an exception (Turok and Idasa statements discussed in Aliber, 2003:484). This, however, may be changing in the form of the national social cluster's newly drafted 'Comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy' (Social Cluster, forthcoming).

This interpretation can be supported by an analysis of the strategy's notion of human development. The term 'human development' can be understood in two ways. In one sense, 'human development' represents an umbrella concept that includes but is not reduced to the idea of poverty reduction. However, in another sense, human development can be seen as one of the various schools of thought on poverty; a school standing as an alternative to more established money-metric perspectives.

This author interprets the JHDS as representing the latter conceptualisation of human development because of the way in which it has chosen to define the concept. The JHDS uses the UNDP definition which takes human development to be a means through which to "enlarg(e) people's choices" through the creation of "an enabling environment for people to live long, healthy and creative lives" (UNDP definition in the JHDS,

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## **Thinking About Escaping Poverty:**

### **A Critical Argument Analysis Identifying the Conceptualisation of Constraints to Poverty Reduction Implicit in the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy**

**By**  
**Lisa van Dongen**  
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**A Minor Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Award of the Degree of**

**Masters of Philosophy in  
Politics, Philosophy and Economics**

Three strategic directions are presented as a response to these three issues (JHDS, 2005:15). These directions are (A) safeguarding and supporting poor and vulnerable households, (B) championing the rights and opportunities for poor residents, and (C) building prospects for social inclusion in the city<sup>37</sup>. Together these complete the so-called Joburg Triangle, as below. The three strategic directions correspond to the three issues, respectively<sup>38</sup>.

**Figure Two: The Johannesburg Triangle**



Source: Johannesburg Human Development Strategy, 2005

The goal sought by each of the strategic directions is to be achieved through the pursuit of a number of interventions. Many of these interventions were already part of the City's social programme, but some were newly introduced through the JHDS. The strategy aims to consolidate all of these interventions into one co-ordinated social plan of action.

The JHDS qualifies its choice of programmes by referring to them as indicative programmes. This is because, at the time of developing the strategy, the exact set of programmes to be implemented had not yet been decided upon. The indicative programmes were listed in the document in order to give an idea of the possible types of

<sup>37</sup> This paper treats the strategy's interventions for addressing inequality and exclusion as poverty reduction programmes (PRPs). These programmes will therefore be included in the analyses undertaken by this study. Several theorists could see this as objectionable as they argue for the need to maintain the distinctions between the admittedly related concepts of inequality, exclusion and poverty (for example Moser, 1998; Lok-Dessallien, 2001). However, even if inequality and exclusion are not themselves read in poverty terms, they remain relevant for inclusion at least in so far as they present obstacles to the poor escaping poverty.

<sup>38</sup> The strategy did acknowledge that overlap would occur.

programme that could be instituted (JHDS, 2005: Footnote 1 page 86). These programmes have, however, been listed on the basis of their being deemed the interventions most likely to have the greatest effect on Johannesburg's social problems in the next ten years (JHDS, 2005:110).

**Table One: Indicative Programmes for the JHDS**

<b>A. Safeguarding and Supporting Poor and Vulnerable Households</b>	<b>B. Championing Rights and Opportunities</b>	<b>C. Building Prospects for Social Inclusion</b>
Responding to Conditions of Household Poverty among Johannesburg Residents	Responding to Inequalities among Johannesburg Residents	Responding to Social Exclusion among Johannesburg Residents
<b>A.1 Social Package</b>	<b>B.1 Economic Equality</b>	<b>C.1 Building Social Cohesion</b>
A.1.1 Gaining access to the package	B.1.1 Establishing a labour market intelligence database	C.1.1 Bringing about youth action
A.1.2 Maintaining access to the package	B.1.2 Supporting the Expanded Public Works Programme	C.1.2 Spearheading diversity campaigns
	B.1.3 Establishing economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the informal economy	C.1.3 Initiating area based campaigns
		C.1.4 Transforming and creating public space
<b>A.2 Facilitating Access to Provincial Social Grants</b>	<b>B.2 Gender and Generational Equality</b>	<b>C.2 Building Community Trust in the City</b>
A.2.1 Launching an information campaign	B.2.1 Establishing an Early Childhood Development (ECD) priority	C.2.1 Strengthening social capital
A.2.2 Accessing identity documents	B.2.2 Attending to women's health and security	
	<b>B.3 Spatial Equality</b>	<b>C.3 Creating Positive Partnership Programmes for Social Inclusion</b>
	B.3.1 Reforming urban management	C.3.1 Establishing a social funding policy
	B.3.2 Establishing sustainable human settlements	C.3.2 Connecting with corporate social investment partners

Source: Johannesburg Human Development Strategy, 2005



Table One outlines the indicative programmes that have been proposed by the JHDS according to their strategic direction.

### **3.4 Categorising the Strategy's Interventions for Analysis**

In order to analyse the interventions contained within the JHDS, this dissertation could either look at each listed intervention individually or it could categorise these interventions into logical groupings. Given the constraints of the thesis, the latter option is preferable. This requires that the different interventions be categorised in some way.

There are a number of ways in which the strategy's programmes can be categorised for analysis. The first is to follow the categorisation made in the JHDS, grouping the programmes into their respective strategic directions (as presented in table one above). This option will not be pursued. The aim of this analysis is to determine the implicit conceptions of poverty reduction constraints. It is, therefore, not prudent to use the categorisations made by the strategy as these will be imbued with the strategy's explicit conceptualisations.

A second approach to categorisation would group interventions according to the type of activity undertaken by each intervention. This approach does not classify interventions according to the strategic directions noted in the strategy but instead takes the reverse approach by looking at the actions first. This dissertation will adopt such an approach by looking directly at the strategy's component interventions in order to identify the implicit conceptualisations. These may or may not concur with the explicit conceptualisations stated in the strategy. This potential similarity or disjuncture will be discussed further in chapter six. To pursue this approach, it is important to define a set of categories.

The Public Service Commission undertook an audit of all national and provincial poverty reduction programmes and projects undertaken in South Africa (2007). The audit was able to classify all of the government's poverty interventions according to their list of programme types<sup>39</sup>. This thesis proposes to use the Public Service Commission's list as

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<sup>39</sup> The audit used the following criteria for understanding whether a project or programme was a poverty reduction intervention: all programmes explicitly related to poverty reduction, all conditional grant allocations, all programmes that provide some form of service and/or infrastructure to communities or the people, and programmes/projects of a developmental nature

a starting point for categorising the interventions of the JHDS. The audit's classifications are as follows:

**Table Two: Public Service Commission's Programmatic Classification**

PROGRAMME TYPE	EXAMPLE OF PROGRAMMES
Social Security	Old Age Pension Child Support Grant Disability Grant Food Parcel
Basic Household Services (Free/Subsidised)	Water and Sanitation Electricity Transport Refuse Removal
Individual Services (Free/Subsidised)	Education and Training Healthcare
Housing	RDP Housing
Land Reform	Land Redistribution Land Restitution Land Tenure Reform
Income Generating Projects and SMMEs	Micro Credit Outlets Skills Support Programmes
Public Works	EPWP - Infrastructure Sector EPWP - Environment and Culture Sector EPWP - Social Sector EPWP - Economic Sector

Source: Public Service Commission, 2007

The paper has chosen to classify the strategy's various component interventions according to the audit's programme types. The programme types presented by the Public Service Commission have been applied to the interventions contained within the JHDS in order to classify the strategy's interventions for analysis. The dissertation proposes that this exercise results in the following classification of the strategy's interventions:

(Public Service Commission, 2007:19). There were a small number of projects that the audit was unable to classify according to their framework. This only represented 5% of all projects and programmes assessed.



**Table Three: Proposed Classification of JHDS Programmes**

PROGRAMME TYPE	JHDS INDICATIVE PROGRAMME
Social Security	A.2 Facilitate Access to Provincial Grants
Basic Household Services	A.1 City Social Package
Income Generating Projects	B.1.3 Establishing Economic Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in the Informal Economy B.2.1 Early Childhood Development
Public Works	B.1.2 Expanded Public Works Programme B.1.1 Labour Market Intelligence Database B.2.1 Early Childhood Development
Sustainable Human Settlements	A.1 City's Social Package B.2.1 Early Childhood Development B.2.2 Women Health and Security B.3.2 Sustainable Human Settlements C.1.1 Youth Action C.1.4 Public Space
Other	C.1.2 Diversity Campaigns C.1.3 Area based Campaigns C.2 Building Community Trust in the City B.3.1 Urban Management B.2.1 Early Childhood Development C.3 Positive Partnerships

The JHDS contains a number of interventions that can relatively easily be classified into four of the seven categories proposed by the Public Service Commission. Firstly, the strategy contains a social security programme in so far as the City facilitates access to provincial grants (A.2). Secondly, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP – B.1.2) can be analysed as a type of public works programme. The establishment of economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the informal economy (B.1.3) can be classified as an income generating intervention. Lastly, the strategy explicitly describes a basic household services intervention as one element of its proposed 'social package' (A.1.1).

The remaining three categories from the audit are not strictly relevant to the JHDS. No reference was made to land reform in the strategy, so this audit category will be ignored.

The strategy does refer to so-called individual services (specifically primary health care), but does so under the guise of public services included in the City's social package<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, housing initiatives were briefly mentioned, but primarily in terms of the provision of basic services (JHDS, 2005: 78). Following the logic presented in the strategy, this dissertation proposes to discuss housing under basic household services. The individual services category will be expanded to incorporate all other services and infrastructure interventions. These will include the provision of early childhood development facilities (B.2.1) the provision of health and security measures (B.2.2), as well as all references to community, public and special services and infrastructure (C.1 and C.2) and sustainable human settlements (B.3.2). This category will be renamed as a 'Sustainable Human Settlements' intervention.

A sixth type of programme has also been added to this dissertation's categorisation in order to cover those interventions in the strategy that do not fit neatly into any of the Public Service Commission's classifications. This sixth type will be called 'Other' and will include programmes such as the proposed urban management reforms (B.3.1) as well as social cohesion projects (C.1 and C.2) and the building of positive partnerships (C.3).

Several of the interventions seem to straddle two or more of these six programme types. For instance, the provision of Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities can be seen as a public service falling into the new 'Sustainable Human Settlements' section. ECD also forms a part of the EPWP's social sector and it can therefore also be discussed as a public works programme. These interventions will be mentioned in both analyses.

Having categorised the interventions listed in the JHDS into six programme types, this paper will undertake a logical analysis of these six programmes. This will be done in order to determine the implicit assumptions about poverty reduction constraints contained within each type of programme.

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<sup>40</sup> The City's social package is comprised of a set of basic household, community, public and special services. Each of these types of services will be discussed further in chapter four. For the purposes of this thesis a distinction has been made between the basic household services and the other services in the social package, where these other services will be assessed under the 'Sustainable Human Settlements' programme type.



## **Chapter Four: Logical Argument Analysis**

### **Method of Analysis**

This dissertation logically analyses the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy in order to ascertain its implicit assumptions about poverty reduction constraints. The paper will do so by deconstructing the strategy's six component programmes into a number of claims through the formalisation process discussed in chapter two. Logical analysis of these claims will highlight a set of assumptions about constraints. In chapter five the dissertation will then explore these assumptions and reconstruct the strategy in terms of the findings of the analysis. In addition to the assumptions, the analysis will produce a related set of 'statements of status' indicating the conditions to which assumptions are subject. In the analysis conducted below, statements of status will only be explicitly noted when there has been a change in the status of assumptions from that captured in the previous statement of status.

The output of the analysis undertaken in this chapter will be the identification of a list of assumptions about the obstacles to escaping poverty. It is important to remember that the intention is not to discuss the accuracy or foundedness of these assumptions. This author seeks to use assumptions to attain a clear picture of how constraints have been perceived by the strategy, not to evaluate its appropriateness. While it is not the primary function of the analysis, this author will indicate which of the assumptions seem questionable by highlighting controversial assumptions in red. The reasons why these assumptions are characterised as arguably contentious will be briefly alluded to in associated footnotes. Arguments around the accuracy of these controversial assumptions will not be taken further in this dissertation.

This chapter is concluded in such a way as to allow chapter five to begin reconstructing the conceptualisation of constraints informing the strategy through exploring the trends between the resultant list of assumptions.

#### 4.1 Social Security (SS)

One of the ways in which the JHDS plans to respond to the poverty problem perceived in the city of Johannesburg is through a social security intervention in the form of welfare grants<sup>41</sup> (A.2 in JHDS, 2005:84-85). South Africa's welfare grants system transfers cash on a monthly basis to those that have registered for the grant and can prove eligibility. People are eligible for grants if they can show that they are both poor and unable to work, being too old, too young or too sick<sup>42</sup>.

The strategy acknowledges that provincial government is tasked with the role of distributing welfare grants (JHDS, 2005:84). Since the City does not have the mandate to be formally involved in distributing grants, the JHDS only refers to a social security intervention in so far as the City would facilitate the access of the eligible to provincial grants (JHDS, 2005:84).

Given the intervention proposed in the strategy and the poverty reduction objective assumed, the strategy can be understood to make the following claim:

**Key Claim (KC4.1):** If the strategy facilitates the access of the eligible poor to provincial welfare grants, then poverty will be reduced.

This claim requires the support of a number of additional assumptions:

**Statement of Status:** Necessary if the strategy's social security intervention is provided for poverty reducing purposes

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Assumption 1: | If the strategy facilitates the access of the eligible poor to provincial grants, then they will receive welfare grants |
| Assumption 2: | If the eligible poor receive welfare grants, then poverty will be reduced   |

<sup>41</sup> In South Africa there are two components to the social security system. The first relates to non-contributory welfare grants that are transferred to the poor. The second comes in the form of contributory schemes such as social insurance for the unemployment or injured. Contributory social security can be understood not as an instrument of poverty reduction, but rather as a system targeting those who are already "relatively privileged" (Seekings, 2007:7). The JHDS does not refer to contributory social security schemes and thus they will not be analysed by this dissertation.

<sup>42</sup> Children aged between 14 and 15 are currently the exception to this rule. These children are neither legally able to work, nor eligible for a grant (an anomaly highlighted in Seekings, 2007)

These assumptions themselves require support. Assumption 1 proposes that access is the major constraint to the poor receiving welfare grants. Moreover, the way in which the strategy intends to facilitate access, points to an understanding of what the perceived problems of access are. The strategy suggests that the obstacles to access can be overcome by providing potential beneficiaries with more information about the welfare system. This information is to be provided through awareness campaigns and the training of front-line City staff working in public facilities (JHDS, 2005:84). The JHDS also intends to overcome the issue of access through assisting those eligible to attain the documentation necessary to claim the grant, in particular identify documents (JHDS, 2005:85). By proposing these interventions, the JHDS has not only made the claim that access is a problem but also that the problem of access is related to a lack of information and documentation.

Assumption 3: A lack of knowledge and information on welfare grants constrains the access of the eligible poor to provincial grants

Assumption 4: A lack of proper documentation constrains the access of the eligible poor to provincial grants

The key claim made by the JHDS regarding social security entails a further assumption about the poverty reducing effect of welfare grants: assumption 2<sup>43</sup>. The JHDS provides no argument for the poverty reducing impact of welfare transfers, but rather takes this relationship for granted as it concentrates on the issues of access. Yet assumption 2 is not self-evident and thus requires further support. A brief analysis of the assumed relationship will follow.

It is credible to believe that the income received in the form of welfare grants can provide the poor some immediate relief. This will often come in the form of reducing the depth of poverty experienced. The interesting question for this dissertation is rather whether the grant can also have a poverty reducing impact, in the incidence sense of the word (the incidence definition of poverty was adopted through the Good Faith approach, as discussed in chapter two). The JHDS proposes that welfare grants can have a poverty

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<sup>43</sup> This assumed relationship is a product of the Good Faith approach undertaken in this paper. The JHDS does in fact make some more modest claims about social security, discussing it in survivalist terms, at least with respect to extremely poor beneficiaries. This disjuncture will be discussed further in the conclusion of the dissertation. For the purposes of this analysis, the social security intervention will be treated in the same fashion as all proposed interventions in JHDS: as a poverty reduction programme.

reducing impact through enabling the poor to invest in several assets, including human capital (JHDS, 2005:85). The strategy also seems to interpret the intervention as able to effect poverty reduction directly. Grants can reduce poverty directly in cases where the size of the grant is sufficient to close the poverty gap of beneficiaries. These two approaches to the relationship between grants and poverty reduction will be explored.

In terms of the direct approach, assumption 2 entails a claim about the size of the poverty gap relative to the size of the grant. Given that the grants are relatively small in relation to postulated minimum subsistence levels and poverty lines, an assumption must have been made about the size of the poverty gap<sup>44</sup>.

Statement of Status: Necessary if welfare grants reduce poverty directly

Assumption 5: Beneficiaries' poverty gaps are equal to or smaller than the size of the grant transferred<sup>45</sup>.

The indirect approach to how grants reduce poverty points to an investment strategy. The investment strategy must make an assumption about the way in which the returns<sup>46</sup> from investments affect the poverty gap.

Statement of Status: Necessary if welfare grants reduce poverty through an investment approach

Assumption 6: The poverty gap is closed through the returns earned on invested welfare grants

This assumption entails a set of further assumptions. Firstly it must have been assumed that beneficiaries are able to invest. Secondly, it must be assumed that they can invest in

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<sup>44</sup> In 2007, the amount transferred ranged from R120 for child support grants to R700 for disability and pension/old age grants. This amount should be understood in the context of the poverty line. The National Treasury Department recommended a poverty line of R1600 per household per month in 2006 prices. This is equal to a proposed poverty line of R430 per person per month, when the full amount is divided by an average household size of 2.9, the average size recorded in the social profile referenced in the JHDS (Treasury, 2007; JHDS, 2005:28)

<sup>45</sup> This is contentious given the small size of the welfare grant. It seems unlikely that the size of the poverty gap in South Africa is equally small given the incidence of chronic poverty in the country (Leibbrandt et al, 2004; May and Carter, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> These returns are not necessarily monetary returns but could also be non-monetary returns, such as improved health or better education.

something that has sufficiently large returns to ultimately move the beneficiary out of poverty.

- Assumption 7: Beneficiaries eligible for the grant have the ability to invest<sup>47</sup>  
Assumption 8: Investments made can offer returns that are large enough to put beneficiaries onto a trajectory out of poverty.

Assumption 8 could be based on two different instantiations. The strategy may assume that either relatively high returns are possible given small investments in low risk activities. Otherwise it could be assumed that the poor are able and likely to engage in reasonably high-risk activities in order to earn the returns required for poverty reduction.

- Assumption 9: Relatively high returns are possible given small investments in low risk activities<sup>48</sup>  
OR  
Assumption 10: The poor are able and likely to invest in reasonably high-risk activities<sup>49</sup>

Assumptions 9 and 10 point to assumptions about the types of activity into which grants will be invested. The JHDS explicitly refers to the possibilities of investing welfare grants into human capital formation in the form of education, health care and nutrition (JHDS, 2005:85). It is thus useful to relook at assumptions 7 to 10 in light of an investment in human capital. Investments in human capital are interesting given that spending on health and nutrition both satisfies the basic needs of the poor and simultaneously serves as a longer-term investment in human capital. The implication is that an investment in human capital is less likely to provoke a debate around the assumption relating to the ability to invest (assumption 7).

Where a human capital investment is anticipated, the strategy must assume high returns on such investments in health and education (assumption 8). If these returns are thought

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<sup>47</sup> While research has shown the poor to have a remarkable ability to invest, it has also been noted that very basic needs may need to be satisfied before investment becomes a priority (eg. Devereux, 2002). Given the size of the grant, it is plausible to suggest that there is not a significant amount of money left for investment purposes after basic need satisfiers have been attained.

<sup>48</sup> It is not often that high returns will be attained through small investments in low risk activities, at least not in the medium term. Investment in human capital could, however, be seen as an exception.

<sup>49</sup> The poor have generally been characterised as risk averse (discussed in Devereux, 2002).

to translate into poverty reduction, then a further set of assumptions must have been made about how human capital can affect poverty reduction. Both improved health and education can be understood to be poverty-reducing assets in their own right, particularly where ill health and a lack of education and skills are defining characteristics of poverty in a multi-dimensional approach to the condition. If poverty reduction is understood in incidence terms, then a direct interpretation would define poverty as a condition of poor health and inadequate education.

Statement of Status: Necessary if an investment in human capital is important in reducing poverty in a direct sense

Assumption 11: Poverty is understood in terms of health and education

An instrumental approach to the importance of health and education would rather see human capital as generating other poverty reducing opportunities. Official literature often understands human capital to be important in reducing poverty through enabling the poor improved access to employment opportunities (as, for instance, argued in DoSD, 1997). This approach in turn is based on an assumption about what constrains people from attaining employment. If this indirect approach has been taken, then two further assumptions must have been made:

Statement of Status: Necessary if an investment in human capital is important in reducing poverty for employment reasons

Assumption 12: The health and education status of the poor constrains their ability to attain employment

Assumption 13: Poverty reduction is constrained due to a lack of employment

The White Paper for Social Welfare also proposes that the poor can invest in other assets such as social capital (DoSD, 1997). Grants could also be invested in physical and financial assets. Assumptions relating to the sufficiency of returns must therefore be applied to investments in such forms of capital (assumption 8). Arguments drawing on these forms of investment are further based on the assumption that such assets are valuable to the poor in poverty reducing terms. Thus poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of such assets.

Statement of Status: Necessary if an investment in other capitals is important for poverty reduction

Assumption 14: Poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of investment in financial, physical and/or social assets<sup>50</sup>.

**Concluding Statement:**

The social security intervention entails two assumptions about what constrains poverty reduction, namely a lack of access to grants and a lack of financial capital (money). The financial capital deficiency can be interpreted as a direct or indirect constraint to escaping poverty. Where grants are provided with a view to their being invested, the set of assumed constraints to poverty reduction expands to include a broader set of assets.

The strategy emphasises the importance of investments in human capital. Official literature has often associated a human capital deficiency with unemployment. A further set of assumptions is evident in so far as the JHDS understands human capital to constrain the attainment of employment, and employment to constrain a reduction in poverty. These include an assumption about the nature of the labour market, where human capital deficits explain unemployment. A relationship is also assumed between poverty and employment, where employment is thought to result in poverty reduction.

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<sup>50</sup> There is no consensus on the real poverty reducing value of social capital (for example, questioned in Adato et al, 2006; du Toit, 2005). Not only must this assumption posit social capital as valuable to the poor in terms of their movement out of poverty, but it must also hold that horizontal social capital can have sufficient returns. This is because the social networks available to the poor in South Africa have been shown to be predominately between people of similar social standings, in other words horizontal or bonding social capital, as opposed to networks cutting across the different classes, in other words vertical or bridging social capital (horizontal social capital defined in Putnam, 1993, 2000). Horizontal forms of social capital have been acknowledged by many theorists to be of less value (Devereux, 2002; also noted in Putnam, 1993, 2000). Social capital will be discussed later in this chapter (4.5, 4.6).

## 4.2 Public Works Programmes (PWP)<sup>51</sup>

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is a programme designed to address the problem of poverty amongst low and unskilled participants. There are two major parts to the programme. The first is a short-term work opportunity where participants are provided with temporary jobs associated with the creation and maintenance of public assets. The number of people required to work on these projects is increased by shifting production from capital to labour intensive techniques (EPWP, 2006). In addition to creating work opportunities, the EPWP also offers a skills development opportunity to each participant in the programme (EPWP, 2006). The second part to the programme, the learnership opportunity, is significantly different to the short-term programme. The learnership offers a small number of participants an opportunity to complete a comprehensive certificate or diploma course that runs for between one and three years (EPWP, 2006). The EPWP is being implemented across the three tiers of government in South Africa in four main sectors: infrastructure<sup>52</sup>, environment and cultural<sup>53</sup>, social<sup>54</sup>, and economic sectors<sup>55</sup>.

This section of the chapter will look at both the short term and the learnership interventions. The dissertation will address the short-term opportunity in more depth given that most participants of the EPWP benefit from this aspect of the programme (up to 97% of participants involved in the EPWP, where the learnership opportunity was designed to admit only 3% of participants as calculated in McCord, 2005b). Having logically analysed the short-term opportunity, the dissertation will briefly turn to an analysis of the learnership programme.

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<sup>51</sup> An earlier version of work informing this section of the chapter was presented by the author at the 2007 SANPAD conference: The Poverty Challenge 2007.

<sup>52</sup> Work opportunities are created in the infrastructure sector by building and maintaining assets such as roads, schools and clinics. This is done in labour intensive rather than capital-intensive ways (EPWP Infrastructure Sector Plan, undated).

<sup>53</sup> The environment and cultural sector is comprised of a number of projects clustered into five core programmes namely Working for the Coast, Working for Tourism, Working on Waste, People and Parks, and Sustainable Land Based Livelihoods programmes (Environment and Culture Sector Plan, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> The social sector focuses its attention on staffing existing and new HCBC and ECD sites. These Home Community Based Care and Early Childhood Development facilities provide a service to children and the sick in poor, previously disadvantaged communities.

<sup>55</sup> The economic sector assists a small number of emerging entrepreneurs to establish an enterprise.



#### 4.2.1 Short Term EPWP Opportunities

The short term EPWP comprises three component interventions, namely the asset creation and maintenance function, the skills development programme, and the short-term work opportunity. In the context of its poverty reduction objective, the programme can be understood to entail the following key claim:

**Key Claim (KC 4.2):** The JHDS reduces poverty through the production and maintenance of public assets and the provision of short-term work and skills development opportunities in the form of the EPWP

This claim entails a set of assumptions about what constrains poverty reduction.

Statement of Status: At least one of the following is necessary if the strategy's public works intervention is provided for poverty reducing purposes

- Assumption 15: Poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of maintained public assets
- Assumption 16: Poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of short-term skills development opportunities
- Assumption 17: Poverty reduction is constrained by a lack of short-term work opportunities

Assumption 15 will not be addressed in this analysis. This is because the impact of the asset creation and maintenance component of the EPWP would have been achieved even without the establishment of the EPWP. Dr Sean Phillips, Chief Operations Officer in the National Department of Public Works, explicitly emphasised the fact that all of the physical capital to be provided through the various EPWP projects are assets that would have been provided otherwise. However, they would likely have been provided through traditional, capital intensive mechanisms were it not for the EPWP intervention (Phillips, 2004). For this reason, the intervention's asset creation function does not provide the poor a value-added benefit<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> By 'value added', this author means a benefit that would otherwise not have been provided were it not for the intervention. The programme could have a value-added impact on poverty if it were to focus rather on the creation and maintenance of strategically important (from a developmental perspective) assets that would not have otherwise been created or maintained. An analysis of the poverty reducing capabilities of physical capital will be explored further in 4.4 and 4.5.

If this is the case then the EPWP must be relying on its skills development and work opportunities components as its primary means of addressing poverty. The focus of this paper will thus be on how these components are thought to have a poverty reduction impact.

Assumption 16 notes the lack of short-term skills development opportunities. Each participant in the EPWP is entitled to a skills development opportunity. This opportunity has been understood to be a “key pillar of success for the EPWP” (EPWP, 2006b: 22). The skills development component of the EPWP operates in two ways: the informal transfer of skills and the formal development of skills through training courses. EPWP workers will benefit from onsite experience and informal ‘on the job’ training. Skills gained through this informal training will generally be relatively low-level, job-specific skills.

All participants in EPWP projects also receive formal training. Short-term work opportunities do not support long-term training opportunities, and for this reason the EPWP committed itself to providing each worker in the programme eight to twelve days of training, where projects were expected to last four to six months<sup>57</sup> (EPWP Infrastructure Sector Plan, undated: 8 Environment and Culture Sector Plan, 2004:17<sup>58</sup>). Since twelve days was not considered long enough to transfer very many more than the job-specific skills that would have otherwise been gained through informal training, several projects opted for the provision of life skills training. These projects, in particular those pursued in the infrastructure sector, decided that training should be done, not with the development of skills in mind, but rather for other “socialisation” purposes<sup>59</sup> (HSRC,

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<sup>57</sup> While these are the official figures, in reality work opportunities often last for a longer period of time. Nevertheless they are short-term opportunities and have been designed as such. This implies that skills development opportunities are likewise designed to be short-term.

<sup>58</sup> The emphasis of this analysis is on the infrastructure, and environment and cultural sectors of the programme, where these are associated primarily with the short term EPWP opportunity. Existing opportunities in the social and economic sectors are predominately learnership opportunities and will thus be discussed in this context. The focus is also justified given that the infrastructure, and environment and cultural sectors can at present be seen as the key sectors in the programme. Together they are responsible for creating 90.4% of the jobs generated through the programme (51.5% and 38.9% respectively as captured in EPWP, 2006b).

<sup>59</sup> The future of this socialisation training seems to be uncertain. The 2005/2006 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report suggests that a new “hard skills” training strategy is being investigated for the infrastructure sector (EPWP, 2006b: 7). The environment and culture sector already focuses its training on ‘hard’ environmental skills like waste management and conservation education. It does, however, also claim to offer project management and financial management courses, craft production,

2004a: 6). This socialisation is designed to provide workers with basic HIV/AIDS and health knowledge, as well as information on how to access other education, training and employment opportunities (EPWP, 2006)<sup>60</sup>.

For this intervention to effect a reduction in poverty, poverty would need to be understood in terms of a deficiency of skills, be they low level, job-specific skills or socialisation skills.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the skills development opportunity is provided for poverty reducing purposes

Assumption 18: Poverty is constrained by a deficiency of low level, job specific skills and life skills<sup>61</sup>

This analysis now turns to the third way in which poverty could be reduced through the EPWP, namely the work opportunity (assumption 17). A short-term work opportunity provides participants both a limited amount of experience as well as a temporary wage. Experience gained serves to reduce the skills deficit, in a similar way to the informal training discussed above. In addition to experience, work opportunities provide their participants a wage.

The wage earned through the EPWP employment opportunity is received only for as long as the project lasts, which is said to be an average of between four and six months for the infrastructure, and environment and cultural projects (EPWP Infrastructure Sector Plan, undated: 8 Environment and Culture Sector Plan, 2004:17). The EPWP has received a special allowance so that it may legally pay workers less than the minimum wage (as noted in the Code of Good practice for employment under the Special Public Works Programme quoted in EPWP, 2006). Thus the amount of money transferred to participants of the programme is not very much. Nevertheless, because the EPWP

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hospitality training and first aid courses (EPWP, 2006b: 9; Environment and Culture Sector Plan, 2004:18).

<sup>60</sup> The forthcoming analysis of socialisation training can also be applied to the labour market intelligence database intervention suggested in the JHDS (B.1.1). These interventions are similar in that they both seek to overcome poverty by providing beneficiaries information about employment opportunities. This database will be further discussed in 4.6.1.

<sup>61</sup> This is contentious in that it posits a relatively small and superficial knowledge deficit as responsible for the condition of poverty.

generally targets those poor people that do not qualify for state grants, the income can be considered relatively significant.

If the wage is thought to be the mechanism to achieve a reduction in poverty, then assumption 17 could be translated in the following way:

Statement of Status: Necessary if the wage provided through the short-term work opportunity is provided for poverty reducing purposes

Assumption 19: Poverty reduction is constrained by the lack of financial capital

Not only this, but it must be assumed that poverty is constrained by a small and temporary injection of such capital.

Assumptions 15 – 19 all highlight an assumed asset deficit, be it physical, human or financial. These capital injections could be thought to reduce poverty either directly or indirectly. If the EPWP is interpreted as a direct intervention, then the analysis is completed as above. However, the JHDS, as well as other official local and national literature on the programme, explicitly associates itself with an indirect, employment related approach<sup>62</sup> (JHDS, 2005: 86-90; EPWP, 2006; CoJ, 2004a). These policy documents are clear about the fact that the main objective of the EPWP is to address poverty by alleviating and reducing unemployment (JHDS, 2005: 86-90; EPWP, 2006; CoJ, 2004a). In so far as the programme reduces poverty through employment, a further set of assumptions can be detected. These depend on how employment is understood to play a role in reducing poverty.

There are two ways in which to understand an indirect, employment related approach to poverty reduction through the EPWP. The first is in terms of job creation and the second in terms of improved access to employment. The JHDS characterises the EPWP as a job creation intervention (JHDS, 2005:88). The national EPWP literature has also been viewed in job creation terms where it has received much attention for its job creation

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<sup>62</sup> The indirect approach could be understood either in employment terms or in other non-employment related ways. There are no indications in the official literature of what such a non-employment related, indirect approach to poverty reduction through the EPWP would be. This option is not explored further in the dissertation.

targets<sup>63</sup>. Yet, a closer reading of the programme seems to indicate that job creation is not the way in which the EPWP plans to sustainably affect unemployment and therefore poverty. The jobs created through the EPWP are only accessible to the poor for a very limited time period. In addition, once a participant has been involved in an EPWP project, they are not eligible to work on another such project for five years following their initial involvement.

Since the EPWP does not intend to sustainably reduce unemployment through the creation of permanent jobs, it could rather be understood in a second way. The EPWP has been argued to reduce poverty indirectly through helping the unemployed poor gain contact with, and entrance into, the labour market. Most official literature and academic theorising on the EPWP attribute the programme with this facilitative role (EPWP, 2006; McCord, 2004, 2005). If poverty is to be reduced through such an approach, then it is possible to reword the key claim to enable further analysis of the approach.

Derivative Claim (DC 4.2.1): The JHDS reduces poverty by improving a participant's access to employment and therefore their employment status. It does so through the production and maintenance of public assets and the provision of short-term work and skills development opportunities in the form of the EPWP

If the strategy interprets the programme in these terms, then it makes a number of assumptions.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the EPWP strives for poverty reduction through improving the access of beneficiaries to employment

Assumption 20: Improved access to employment results in employment  
 Assumption 21: Employment attained because of participation in the EPWP results in reduced poverty<sup>64</sup>

Together these relationships imply the following:

<sup>63</sup> In 2004 President Mbeki promised the South African public that the EPWP would generate one million work opportunities in five years (Phillips, 2004:24), with the City of Johannesburg responsible for the creation of 117 500 of these million (CoJ, 2004a).

<sup>64</sup> For this to be founded the assumption must either ignore the condition of working poverty or it must assume that the jobs attained are such that workers do not remain poor. This is contentious given that the type of job attained is likely to be related to the low level skills and short-term experience gained through the programme.

Assumption 22: Improved access to employment results in poverty reduction

The way in which the intervention hopes to improve access to employment also indicates a further set of assumptions about why people are unemployed.

Assumption 23: Access to employment is constrained by a lack of maintained public assets and short-term work and skills opportunities

Given the analysis above, this assumption points to a recognition of asset deficiencies, in particular a lack of human (skills and experience) and financial (temporary wage) capital. But explaining the problem of access in asset terms seems to explain unemployment in terms of unemployability. Employability is here understood to refer to the desirability of a person in terms of the labour market. Prior to the intervention, participants are thought to lack certain desirable traits. This deficiency results in unemployment. The EPWP facilitates a beneficiary's access to more permanent employment opportunities by making them more employable.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the EPWP strives to improve access to employment through providing beneficiaries human and financial capital

Assumption 24: People are unemployed because they are unemployable

This assumption interprets employability in terms of low level, job specific and socialisation skills as well as a small and temporary financial capital deficit.

For the interpretation of unemployability in skills terms to be more plausible, given the large supply of low skilled, unemployed workers in South Africa<sup>65</sup> a further set of assumptions are likely to have been made (as explicated in McCord, 2004a):

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<sup>65</sup> For employment figures see Kingdon and Knight (2005).

Statement of Status: Probable<sup>66</sup> if the EPWP strives for poverty reduction through improving the employability of beneficiaries

Assumption 25: Unemployment is a transient problem that will be resolved as the economy grows and needs more workers, particularly low and unskilled workers<sup>67</sup>

Assumption 26: The economy is growing

Similarly, for unemployability to be cast in terms of a small and temporary financial capital constraint, a transient or frictional picture of the labour market must have been assumed. A short-term wage could improve a person's likelihood of gaining employment, for instance, by improving their presentation at interviews, their general health and their ability to seek work. These explanations all show unemployment to be constrained by individual characteristics of the unemployed rather than the outcome of the structure of the labour market. This serves to reject a more structural explanation, which would rather posit unemployment in terms of a more fundamental lack of opportunities.

#### **4.2.2 Learnership Opportunities**

Learnership opportunities are available in each sector, and account for all existing opportunities in social and economic sectors<sup>68</sup>. They are significantly different from the short term EPWP opportunity. Learnerships afford participants a more comprehensive skills development opportunity where participants leave the programme with a certificate, a diploma or a degree (EPWP, 2006). The aim of the opportunity is to equip learners with both a sufficient level of skill and a skill of the type that is in demand in the

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<sup>66</sup> These assumptions are not presented as necessary in that other explanations could be employed for why there is a high demand for low skilled workers. For instance, the EPWP could possibly perceive the demand for the type of skills they transfer to be so significant, that it negates the low demand for the level of skill transferred. The policy may also choose to argue that there is a significant difference between the demand for low and for unskilled workers. These are considered less plausible explanations and are thus not pursued further in this dissertation.

<sup>67</sup> This is not the way in which unemployment in South Africa is typically characterised. Many theorists rather explain unemployment in structural terms by referencing the nature of the labour market and the shape of the economy, for instance regarding the lack of work opportunities for low skilled workers (McCord, 2005a; McCord, 2004; Kraak, 2004; HSRC, 2004b).

<sup>68</sup> Currently, both social and economic sectors are only offering learnership opportunities. The social sector has been tasked to implement a short-term programme, creating 150 000 work opportunities in the five years ending in 2009. However, it is not clear from the 2005/2006 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report that the social sector is implementing or planning to implement a broad intervention offering temporary work opportunities (EPWP, 2006b). Sector plans for the economic sector have not been made widely available and no plans seem to have been made to broaden the programme beyond learnerships.

economy. In addition to comprehensive training, participants are provided with generous stipends, access to credit and a number of years worth of practical work experience (EPWP 2006b: 9).

The key claim made by this intervention can thus be expressed as follows:

Key Claim (KC4.2.2): The EPWP reduces poverty through the learnership programme by providing participants with comprehensive skills training, with work experience of a significant duration, with a stipend and with access to credit

The critical difference between the short term and learnership programmes is not in the way in which the respective interventions understand the constraints to poverty reduction, but rather in terms of the magnitude of assistance required to overcome the constraint. While the short-term opportunities provide a small amount of assistance that is designed to trigger an action that could eventually result in poverty reduction, the learnership is more generous in its provision.

### **Concluding Statement**

The public works intervention understands the constraints to poverty reduction in terms of physical capital, human capital and financial capital. The strategy focuses on an indirect interpretation of the intervention, which is explicitly employment related. In so far as the temporary work opportunity is thought to reduce poverty indirectly through improving a participant employability, a further set of assumptions is made. This includes an assumption about a positive relationship between poverty and employment. It also includes an assumption about the causes of unemployment, namely the unemployability of the poor explained in terms of human and financial capital deficiencies.



### 4.3 Income Generating Programmes (IGP)

The only income-generating programme suggested by the strategy is instantiated in the form of proposed opportunities for women in the informal economy (B.1.3 in the JHDS, 2005:90-92). The strategy outlines how it aims to provide women with these opportunities by facilitating the establishment and growth of informal enterprises. It refers explicitly to three types of assistance: the provision of business skills training, facilitated access to financial support or credit, and the creation of a more conducive environment into which informal enterprises are to be established and grown (JHDS, 2005:90-92). The JHDS intends to provide such assistance through not only introducing new support programs, and improving upon existing ones, but also making the poor more aware of what support programmes are currently in place<sup>69</sup>.

In the context of this intervention, the strategy can be understood to make the following key claim:

**Key Claim 4.3:** Poverty can be reduced if the strategy assists poor women to establish and grow small enterprises in the informal economy

This claim is not self-evident and thus requires the support of a further set of assumptions.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the income generating intervention is provided for poverty reducing purposes

Assumption 27: Women are constrained from establishing and growing small enterprises in the informal economy

Assumption 28: If women establish and grow small enterprises in the informal economy, then poverty can be reduced

These assumptions demonstrate that poverty can be reduced if the strategy assists poor women in overcoming the constraints to establishing and growing small enterprises in the informal economy (key claim 4.3).

<sup>69</sup> The way in which the JHDS proposes not only to provide new and more support, but also to make women more aware of the support already offered, points to an interesting set of assumptions about a lack of awareness as being a constraint to poverty reduction. This assumption will be discussed and interrogated further under 4.6.1.

In so far as the assistance provided by the strategy enables women to overcome the constraints, the intervention must have made several assumptions about what those constraints are.

- Assumption 29: A lack of business skills constrains poor women from establishing and growing small enterprises in the informal economy
- Assumption 30: A lack of access to finance and credit constrains poor women from establishing and growing small enterprises in the informal economy
- Assumption 31: The environment constrains poor women from establishing and growing small enterprises in the informal economy

Assumptions 29 and 30 seem to be similar to several of the assumptions uncovered in the EPWP intervention (assumptions 18 and 19). There is a common understanding that a lack of skills and a lack of access to financial capital act as obstacles to poverty reduction. While the form of the financial support and the intensity of the training courses are likely to differ, the diagnosis of constraints seems to be similar.

In addition to these constraints, the IGP intervention also recognises as a constraint the environment into which enterprises are introduced (assumption 31). This assumed constraint is interesting in that it recognises a constraint external to the poor. The only explicit reference to how the context could be made more enabling is the strategy's proposal that Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities be provided to mothers. These ECD programmes are able to free mothers to pursue economic activities, where they may otherwise have been tied up with child caring responsibilities (JHDS, 2005:92). It is arguably possible to look to the official SMME interventions that are being pursued in South Africa, in order to gain some insight into what else could be implied by this proposed environment intervention<sup>70</sup>. SMME policy recognises the need to reform bylaws and reduce the amount of red tape involved in starting up an enterprise, as some of the ways in which to assist in the creation of a conducive environment (DTI, 1995; also discussed in Rogerson, 2004).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> An SMME intervention is an income generating intervention in the same way as the one being discussed in this section of the chapter. SMME policy is different primarily in targeting terms, where it is applicable to enterprises in both the formal and informal economies, as well as being applicable to a wider set of beneficiaries than the set of women targeted in the JHDS.

<sup>71</sup> Bylaw reform and conducive environments will be discussed further in 4.6.3

Assumption 28 also entails a further set of assumptions. There are arguably two ways in which to understand assumption 28. The first is that a reduction in poverty is the direct result of the establishment of, or growth of, an enterprise. This posits poverty in terms of a lack of growing enterprises. It is more likely that enterprises are indirectly important for poverty reduction, from an income generation perspective. Enterprises are likely to effect a reduction in poverty through generating profit and monetary value. Such an argument assumes that the establishment or growth of an enterprise produces value and profit, and that this value and profit results in poverty reduction.

Statement of Status: Necessary if IGP reduces poverty through value and profit

Assumption 32: A small enterprise in the informal economy can produce profit and value<sup>72</sup>

Assumption 33: The profit and value produced through a small enterprise in the informal economy can result in poverty reduction<sup>73</sup>

This last assumption is further informed by another set of assumptions. Any value or profit derived through an enterprise needs to be sufficiently sustainable to see the poor close the poverty gap, and thereby move out of poverty. In addition, it will also need to be large enough to enable the poor to cover the costs of establishing and growing the enterprise, for instance by paying back any loans they incurred.

Assumption 34: The profit and value produced can be sustained

Assumption 35: The profit and value produced can be sufficient to cover the costs of establishing and growing the enterprise as well as the closing of the poverty gap<sup>74</sup>

The likelihood of this type of profit and value being generated would depend on the nature of the economy. Thus the intervention is based on additional assumptions about the absorptive capacity of the economy.

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<sup>72</sup> Most small enterprises in the informal economy are not especially profitable but are rather better characterised as survivalist (as discussed in JHDS, 2005:40; also in Western Cape, 2006:176). There are, however, larger informal enterprises that are doing well financially.

<sup>73</sup> Where the profits of most small enterprises are minimal, assumption 33 must understand the poverty gap to be equally small, whether the gap is understood to be only monetary or also non-monetary. This is contentious given what has been theorised about poverty in South Africa (Leibbrandt et al, 2004; May and Carter, 2001)

<sup>74</sup> This assumption shares the contentions alluded to in footnote 73. The requirement is greater, however, where the value and profits must both close the poverty gap and repay debts and costs incurred.

- Assumption 36: The nature of the economy is such that a small enterprise in the informal economy can produce and sustain sufficient value and profit to cover the costs of establishing and growing the enterprise as well as the closing of the poverty gap<sup>75</sup>
- Assumption 37: The nature of the economy is such that it can absorb new enterprises while still ensuring that existing enterprises remain sufficiently profitable<sup>76</sup>

### **Concluding Statement**

This section of the strategy proposes that the constraints to poverty reduction are associated with a dearth of income generating enterprises. This section proposes that there are three constraints preventing women from establishing and growing informal enterprises. The first two of these assumed constraints are characterised as asset constraints in the form of human and financial capital deficiencies. The third constraint focuses on the environment in which enterprises operate. It is proposed that this environment prevents poverty reduction. In so far as income generation is thought to be the important factor in achieving poverty reduction, it is assumed that the economy does not present a constraint to poverty reduction.

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<sup>75</sup> This assumption indicates that the economy does not present a constraint to establishing and growing a small informal enterprise. This is contentious when the formal and informal economies are viewed as influencing one another. Large corporations have often undercut smaller enterprises jeopardising their profitability and even their existence, particularly in those sectors that women most often access.

<sup>76</sup> This is debatable given that a greater supply of similar products often drives down the asking price of products for sale. This impacts upon the profitability of enterprises.

#### **4.4 Basic Household Services (BHS)**

The JHDS recommends that various services be provided to the poor in the form of a social package (JHDS, 2005:77-83). These services include basic household services as well as community, public and special services. The first of these will be discussed in this section while the other three types of services will be discussed in 4.5. The strategy understands the provision of basic household services as the provision of free and subsidised water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal (JHDS, 2005:78). Since services are provided to households, the intervention has inevitably been associated with the provision of infrastructure and housing. The JHDS has explicitly conceptualised the provision of services and the provision of housing together in this intervention (JHDS, 2005:80).

In addition, a second intervention related to basic household services is described in the JHDS. This second intervention focuses on facilitating a household's access to basic household services. It does so by ensuring their registration on the City's databases of account holders. Both interventions will be logically analysed in this section.

##### **4.4.1 The Provision of Free and Subsidised Basic Household Services**

The first intervention can be understood in terms of the following key claim:

Key Claim (KC4.4.1): If poor households are provided with free and subsidised basic services and housing, then poverty will be reduced<sup>77</sup>

This claim is founded on an understanding of a physical capital constraint to poverty reduction, where physical capital is defined to be not only infrastructure but also associated basic services, as discussed in chapter one.

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<sup>77</sup> The argument for providing basic household services is often instantiated in a human rights discourse rather than a poverty reduction one. Even so, this paper must treat the intervention as a poverty reducing intervention due to the Good Faith approach adopted in this paper. The ensuing analysis, however, is not as clearly defined as the analyses of previous interventions, for reasons associated with this discord.

Statement of Status: Necessary if basic household services are provided for poverty reducing purposes

Assumption 38: The lack of free and subsidised basic household services and housing constrains poverty reduction<sup>78</sup>

This constraint could be either direct or indirect. A direct interpretation would explain poverty reduction in terms of physical capital. This would entail a notion of poverty that emphasises the physical capital deficit as central to the condition of poverty. The strategy does explicitly note the significance in poverty terms of improved living standards brought about through physical capital (JHDS, 2005:83).

The physical capital constraint could also be understood as a constraint in an indirect way. A further set of constraints must then have been assumed. The strategy has viewed physical capital as important with reference to vulnerability (JHDS, 2005:83). Official documentation also associates service delivery with the development of other forms of capital including human capital (for instance, the DoH, undated; DWAF, 2002; DEAT, 2000).

Living in a serviced house will reduce a household's exposure to risk, for instance fire, flooding, diseases and crime (DoH, undated). It also provides them with a safer source of water and energy (DWAF, 2002). In addition, the intervention improves a household's ability to mitigate against and cope with the risks to which they are exposed. Thus physical capital can result in reduced vulnerability (vulnerability discussed in Chambers, 1995).

A serviced home can also have an impact on asset accumulation with specific reference to human and financial capital. The provision of basic household services can improve a household's human capital in health terms through reducing susceptibility to diseases through better sanitation, as well as through improving immunity by enabling a better night's sleep in dry, warm conditions (JHDS, 2005:29; also listed in DoH, undated, DWAF, 2002). The intervention also creates a more conducive environment for learning

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<sup>78</sup> While this dissertation recognises that the order of magnitude is significantly different between the provision of housing and the provision of basic household services, it treats these interventions together as they were presented by the strategy. In testing the truth of this assumption in reality however, it may be worth treating housing and basic household services separately.

through the provision of electricity. Electricity improves a learner's ability to work at night. Services could also save beneficiaries' time, time that would otherwise have been spent servicing the home, for instance, collecting water.

The basic household services intervention improves a household's financial capital particularly where the intervention is associated with the provision of housing (DoH, undated). Owning a house has both an immediate and a derivative value. In terms of the latter, households can rent out a portion of their home to tenants or dedicate a part of the area to some productive activity. This enables the household access to extra income<sup>79</sup>. Households also save the money previously needed to pay for rent.

Given these two indirect interpretations, a set of further assumptions might have been made. Firstly, poverty is reduced through conditions such as asset accumulation and reduced vulnerability. Secondly, poverty-reducing conditions are generated by the provision of basic household services.

Statement of Status: Necessary if an indirect interpretation of the intervention is employed

- Assumption 39: Poverty reduction is constrained by a set of conditions, such as vulnerability and a lack of assets
- Assumption 40: A physical capital deficiency constrains the development of a set of poverty reducing conditions such as reduced vulnerability and an increased asset base

#### **4.4.2 The Facilitation of Registration on the City's Database**

Physical capital is not the only assumed obstacle to poverty reduction with respect to basic household services. The JHDS also suggests a second access related constraint when discussing this intervention. The JHDS notes that those households not currently registered as account holders on the City's database will not benefit from the interventions and will therefore remain unassisted (JHDS, 2005:83). In this way the strategy recognises the problem of the so-called 'invisible' poor. The strategy notes that the invisible poor are probably the poorest of the poor and yet are also the ones least

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<sup>79</sup>In reality the houses provided are extremely small, and the level of services provided for free is very low. For this reason the intervention does not seem to have been directly designed with this solution in mind.

likely to receive assistance (JHDS, 2005:83). Thus the City recognises that not being registered on the database is a serious constraint to poverty reduction. In response, the City has begun a registration drive aimed at bringing poor households onto their database. This intervention points a second key claim.

**Key Claim (KC 4.4.2):** The JHDS reduces poverty by facilitating the registration of poor households onto the City database of account holders, thereby ensuring their access to free and subsidised basic household services and housing.

This claim has been made based on a number of assumptions. In particular, the critical constraint to receiving physical capital is shown to be the fact that the poor are not registered with the City.

Statement of Status: Necessary if poverty is reduced through the facilitated registration of the poor onto the City's database of account holders

- Assumption 41: The poor experience a problem accessing those basic household services that reduce poverty
- Assumption 42: If poor households are registered on the City's database of account holders then they will receive access to free and subsidised basic services and housing

Both interventions 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 entail a further assumption relating to the cost of the intervention to the poor. All interventions have costs both to the provider and to the recipient. In the case of basic household services and housing, the intervention could be costly for the poor in monetary and non-monetary ways.

The monetary costs to the poor associated with receiving basic household services include the requirement that the poor supplement accounts payments where services are only partially subsidised. While some households will be deemed eligible for free services, many will be granted a rebate on a proportion of the costs, according to their own means (assessed in terms of means testing, consumption based testing and property rates valuations as explained in JHDS, 2005:81-82). Where services are not fully subsidised, the poor will find additional costs being levied at them. The aim of breeding a culture of payment is in fact explicitly and repeatedly emphasised in the strategy (where the strategy focuses on the impact of non-payment for the City, JHDS, 2005: 47, 81, 103). The basic household services intervention could conceivably leave



some poor people worse off, if they are either unable to pay their part toward the subsidised services, or if they were receiving but not paying for similar services before being registered on the database<sup>80</sup>.

There could also be non-monetary costs to receiving the strategy's basic household services. If a household were to be allocated a dwelling in a new area then there will be a significant change to their lives including the destabilisation of their social networks. This might result in reduced social capital being available to the relocated households. The new location may also bring with it new costs especially if the location is either peripheral or in an undesirable area. These costs might include a lack of opportunities in the vicinity, longer times spent in transit to work as well as higher transport costs, and even possibly health and safety risks where the poor are moved to live on or near degraded and polluted land.

In addition, there may be costs associated with becoming registered on the City's database. If the poor worry that becoming registered will give the City a degree of control or management over their lives, then they may consider the cost of becoming registered significant. The City does explicitly note that the capturing of households onto a database will assist with, for instance, the policing of the number of shacks in an informal settlement area (JHDS, 2005: 83). Being 'invisible' may, on the other hand, have some advantages to the poor, especially where there are antagonistic relationships between the City and poor residents.

The City, in so far as they recognise these potential costs, would need to assume that they do not jeopardise the poverty reducing impact of the assistance<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> This may be the case if poor households were not receiving such services in the past, but were rather making use of another, lower quality but cheaper service. It may also apply to those that were receiving services previously but not paying for them, including those that may have found some illegal way in which to gain access to services.

<sup>81</sup> The strategy has not explicitly recognised the cost to the poor of any of their interventions. Yet, as argued, if an intervention claims to have a poverty reducing function, then it must have made certain assumptions about the costs to the poor of their various interventions. The omission of a cost related discourse in the strategy will be mentioned again in chapter six.

Statement of Status: Necessary if poverty is reduced through the provision of basic household services and the facilitated registration of the poor onto the City's database of account holders

Assumption 43: The gains from the interventions will outweigh both the costs (monetary and non-monetary) of the intervention to the poor as well as the size of the poverty gap

For the City to downplay the importance of these costs, it would need to make a further set of assumptions. For instance, the City may need to assume that, even where the costs of registration are not significant, there is a degree of trust between the poor and themselves and that this will remain the case.

Assumption 44: There is a degree of trust between the poor and the City that the costs to registration are, and will remain, insignificant in poverty terms<sup>82</sup>

The intervention will also need to assume that any costs that do exist can be absorbed. In other words, it assumes that the poor are able to manage additional expenses.

Assumption 45: Additional expenses will not place an exorbitant burden on the poor<sup>83</sup>

This assumption also entails the supposition that it serves the interests of the poor more to receive subsidised services, than it does for them not to receive these services.

### **Concluding Statement**

The basic household services intervention points to a physical capital constraint. Basic household services can reduce poverty both directly and indirectly. Where the physical capital constraint is interpreted indirectly, asset deficiencies and vulnerability are highlighted as obstacles to escaping poverty. The strategy also highlights an access-

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<sup>82</sup> This is an interesting assumption given the relationship between the City and its poor residents, in particular over the issue of services. The past few years have seen a sharp increase in the number of hostile strikes over service delivery targeted at the City. There are also a number of community-based organisations that are very vocal about their distrust of the City's service-related policies, including the Anti-Privatisation Forum, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and the Soweto Concerned Residents (discussed in Buhlungu, undated).

<sup>83</sup> This entails an idea of the size of the poverty gap. A number of cases have been reported of people receiving infrastructure, but not the services themselves due to their inability to pay for these services.

related constraint to poverty reduction. The JHDS focuses on the problem of service delivery in registration terms as opposed rather recognising constraints within the City or constraints related to their relationship with the poor. Significantly, the JHDS must assume that poor people have the ability to pay for subsidised services and that this ability is not itself a constraint to poverty reduction.

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#### 4.5 Sustainable Human Settlements (SHS)

A sustainable human settlement has been defined as a settlement that provides its residents a full range of services (expressed as such in Agenda 21, UNDP). For the purposes of this dissertation the sustainable human settlements category will refer to those interventions involved in providing and maintaining services through infrastructure and facilities provision. In the strategy this comes predominantly in the form of the provision of the City's social package to the poor. Given that basic household services have been addressed previously, this section looks at the non-basic-household services in the strategy, which can be divided into public, community and special services<sup>84</sup>. In addition, the following programmes from within the strategy could also be classified as sustainable human settlement interventions: the provision of early childhood development facilities (B.2.1) the provision of health and security measures for women (B.2.2), youth action zones (C.1.1) and the 'Public Spaces' initiatives (C.1.4)<sup>85</sup>.

This intervention entails the following overarching claim:

**Key Claim (KC4.5):** If infrastructure and services are delivered to the poor, then poverty will be reduced

Infrastructure and services are a form of physical capital. The intervention therefore posits an assumption about the constraints to poverty reduction.

Statement of Status: Necessary if poverty is reduced through the provision of infrastructure and services

**Assumption 46:** A physical capital deficiency constrains poverty reduction

There are three types of infrastructure and services provided through this intervention in the JHDS, namely public, community and special. Further argument analysis will be

<sup>84</sup> The form taken by this analysis will be similar to the form of analysis in 4.4. This does not indicate repetition, however, as the interventions are different, where 4.4 focuses on basic household infrastructure and services and 4.5 focuses on community, public and special infrastructure and services.

<sup>85</sup> Each of these programmes can be classified as a public, community or special service.

done individually for these three forms. It will therefore be appropriate to reword the key claim according to each of these component interventions.

#### **4.5.1 Community Infrastructure and Services**

Derivative Claim (DC4.5.1): If community infrastructure and services are delivered to the poor, then poverty will be reduced

Community services and facilities are designed for use by the surrounding community. These include libraries, early childhood development facilities, sports and recreation facilities, youth actions zones, public spaces, and parks (1.1; 3.1). An argument must be presented to substantiate the claim that such facilities and services can reduce poverty.

The intervention could either be understood as a direct or indirect mechanism for poverty reduction. A direct approach would need to ascribe a conceptualisation of poverty to the strategy, namely that poverty is defined as a lack of community services and facilities. It is more plausible, however, that such a form of physical capital is not in itself poverty reducing but is rather instrumentally important in generating a response which is important in reducing poverty.

The JHDS mentions a number of different ways in which community services and facilities might indirectly reduce poverty. The first relates to the role of these services and facilities in creating community cohesion and social capital. Community facilities can also be important for the development of other forms of capital. For instance libraries could help develop human capital through providing knowledge.

A third way in which facilities and services could be poverty reducing is through the creation of environments conducive to the conditions promoting a move out of poverty. For instance, youth action zones (C.1.1) create an environment conducive to achievement amongst the youth (JHDS, 2005:103-105). Poverty can be reduced through reforming the built environment, thereby improving the health and safety of women (B.2.2). This implies that the environment is thought to influence and modify the poverty inducing behaviour of individuals.

In so far as the strategy explains poverty reduction indirectly, as illustrated above, it would need to make two further assumptions. Firstly, poverty reduction is achieved through the promotion of conducive environments, social inclusion, and social and other forms of capital. Secondly, these factors are a product of community services and facilities.

Statement of Status: Necessary if an indirect interpretation of the intervention is adopted

- Assumption 47: Poverty reduction is constrained by a set of conditions, such as a lack of conducive environments, social cohesion, social capital<sup>86</sup>, as well as other capitals
- Assumption 48: A lack of community infrastructure and services constrains the development of a set of poverty reducing conditions, including conducive environments, social cohesion, social and other capitals

In so far as, for instance, the community cohesion explanation is employed, cohesion is assumed to play a role in reducing poverty. Poverty must therefore be understood in terms of a lack of cohesion. In addition, community services and facilities must be involved in the creation of a sense of cohesion. If the strategy anticipates that this will occur, then the strategy must entail an assumption about what constrains communities from becoming more cohesive, namely a lack of community infrastructure and services.

#### 4.5.2 Public Infrastructure and Services

Derivative Claim (DC4.5.2): If public infrastructure and services are delivered to the poor, then poverty will be reduced

The public services and facilities referred to in the strategy include roads and clinics. These facilities are available to the benefit of the public at large, both poor and non-poor as well as those living both in and outside of the community in which the facility or service is provided.

In a similar way to community interventions, it is possible to understand this derivative claim in direct terms where poverty is understood to be a deficiency of public

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<sup>86</sup> The contention over social capital is captured in footnote 50.

infrastructure and services. It is more plausible to view this intervention in indirect terms, where public services and facilities are instrumental in the creation of a second condition, which in turn is associated with poverty reduction.

Official documentation has listed a number of indirect ways, including economic growth, asset accumulation and improved accessibility. Public infrastructure can be poverty reducing through growth (The Presidency, 2006). For example roads could bring new work related opportunities to an area. Growth is also affected through infrastructure in so far as infrastructure improves productivity, the rate of return on investments and capital generation (reviewed in Agenor and Dodson, 2006; also discussed in Romp and de Haan, 2005). Asset generation is also important for poverty reduction in non-growth related ways. For instance, a clinic in the area could improve the human capital of beneficiaries, which could be seen as poverty reducing either in its own right or in employment terms.

Accessibility is also improved through road networks (JHDS, 2005:78, 97). This is important from the perspective of people moving both out of and into an area. A better road will not only allow emergency vehicles to operate in an area, but could also provide commuters access to a more efficient and cheaper transport network where such networks are catalysed in currently under-serviced areas (transport discussed in JHDS, 2005:99). Thus accessibility could be considered an important way in which poverty can be reduced.

Statement of Status: Necessary if an indirect interpretation of the intervention is adopted

Assumption 49:	Poverty reduction is constrained by a set of conditions, such as a lack of growth, assets and accessibility
Assumption 50:	A lack of public infrastructure and services constrains the development of a set of poverty reducing conditions, including growth, assets and accessibility

Applying such assumptions to, for instance, the growth argument would imply that assumptions are made both about the lack of public infrastructure that constrains growth, and about the lack of growth that constrains poverty reduction.

### 4.5.3 Special Infrastructure and Services

Derivative claim (DC4.5.3): If special infrastructure and services are delivered to the poor, then poverty will be reduced

Special services are defined to be those services and facilities targeted to a limited section of the population. In the strategy the only example of a special service described in any depth was a transport subsidisation programme for school learners. A subsidy enables the beneficiary to save a little money that would otherwise have been spent on paying the full price, assuming that the beneficiary would have bought the service without the subsidy. Such a subsidy thus saves beneficiaries money and arguably time, where the beneficiary would otherwise have, for instance, walked to school. In so far as transport subsidisation is an accurate example of a special service, these services can be seen as fundamentally different from the physical capital interventions described in 4.5.1 and 4.5.2. A more comprehensive analysis would require a better understanding of other special services proposed.

### Concluding Statement

These public, community and special infrastructure and services interventions draw attention to a physical capital constraint to poverty reduction. This constraint can be interpreted either directly or indirectly where physical capital is instrumentally important in reducing poverty. Where the latter is the case, both the strategy and other official documents indicate that the underlying constraints to poverty reduction could include a lack of social cohesion, a lack of growth, inaccessibility and capital deficiencies. The JHDS also recognises that physical capital interventions can create environments that are more conducive to poverty reduction.



## 4.5 Other Poverty Reduction Interventions

Several of the interventions proposed in the strategy were not easily classified into any one of the above categories; in particular the proposed urban management reforms (B.3.1), several social cohesion and social trust interventions (C.1.2, C.2.1 and C.1.3), a set of awareness campaigns, and the building of positive partnerships (C.3). A sixth programme type has therefore been added to the analysis to cover these 'other' interventions. This section will briefly look at these four types of intervention.

### 4.6.1 Awareness Campaigns

The JHDS proposes the use of awareness campaigns in relation to almost all of the indicative programmes listed in the strategy<sup>87</sup>. For instance, one of the ways in which the strategy seeks to develop social cohesion is through diversity campaigns discouraging discrimination on the basis of difference (age, gender, special needs, HIV status, nationality, sexual preference, race and social status – C.1.2). Mention was made of embarking on information campaigns to improve awareness on who is eligible for welfare grants (A.2) and income generating programmes (B.1.3). The importance of early childhood development (B.2.1), and the availability of health care services (B.2.2) would also be impressed upon Johannesburg's poor through awareness campaigns. The proposed labour market database intends to assist the unemployed poor gain employment through providing them access to information about work and skills development opportunities (database, B.1.1 and socialisation training in the EPWP, B.1.2). Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS campaigns were listed in terms of youth development (C.1.1).

An awareness intervention would be underpinned by the following claim:

**Key Claim (KC4.6.1):** If awareness campaigns are conducted, poverty will be reduced

There are various ways in which to understand this assumed relationship between awareness campaigns and poverty reduction. A direct interpretation posits poverty in

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<sup>87</sup> Awareness campaigns were mentioned in A.2, B.1, B.2, C.1 and C.2.

terms of a lack of awareness. A lack of knowledge can be considered a form of poverty. Given the depth of knowledge transferred during an awareness campaign, it can be argued that analysis would show this interpretation to focus on a low-level knowledge constraint, similar to the assumed constraint informing the short-term skills development opportunities in the public works programmes (assumption 18).

It is also plausible to interpret the strategy through an indirect approach. In such a scenario, awareness is a constraint to the development of some other condition, which in turn effects a reduction in poverty. The strategy indicates two such conditions. The first relates to a case where awareness campaigns result in behaviour modification such as those related to diversity or HIV/AIDS and substance abuse issues (JHDS, 2005:97, 104-105). The second focuses on increased awareness that results in a demand for beneficial services for instance those campaigns run around early childhood development facilities and certain health related services (JHDS, 2005:93-98).

Improved awareness is understood to result in behaviour modification, which in turn is anticipated to overcome the obstacle to poverty reduction.

Statement of Status: Necessary if poverty is addressed through awareness campaigns that seek a modification in the behaviour of the poor

Assumption 51: If awareness campaigns are conducted, then recipients of information will modify their behaviour

Assumption 52: If recipients of information modify their behaviour, then poverty will be reduced

Assumption 51 proposes that people can and do respond to awareness campaigns through some significant behavioural change. In addition, assumption 52 posits poverty in terms of a deficiency in the actions of poor people. This entails a specific notion of constraint.

Assumption 53: Poverty reduction is constrained by the behaviour of poor people

The second type of awareness campaign can be characterised as an intervention addressing demand deficiencies. Such interventions posit the problem not only in terms an insufficient supply of services but also in terms of a lack of demand for the services.

This indicates that one of the constraints to poverty reduction relates to the poor not wanting the correct things.

Statement of Status: Necessary if poverty is reduced through awareness campaigns effecting increased demand

Assumption 54: There is not sufficient demand for poverty reducing services amongst the poor

### **Concluding Statement**

Awareness is highlighted as a constraint to poverty reduction. The types of awareness campaigns provided through the JHDS indicate that a lack of awareness is problematic both in terms of the need for a behaviour change and in terms of the need to change what people want for themselves. It is assumed that these changes can be achieved through awareness campaigns.

### **4.6.2 Social Inclusion Projects**

The JHDS proposes a set of social cohesion and social trust formation projects in response to social exclusion such as area based, diversity and inclusion campaigns (C.1.2, C.1.3 and C.2.1)<sup>88</sup>. In association with these social cohesion projects, the strategy includes interventions designed to strengthen social capital. This is done through encouraging social investment by the poor into their homes and communities as well as into their local government (C.2.1).

Key Claim (KC4.6.2): Social cohesion and social capital have a poverty reducing ability

Whether these interventions are understood in direct or indirect ways, they make two important assumptions. The first relates to the value of social cohesion and social capital, and the second relates to the current state of deficiency in this regard.

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<sup>88</sup> These campaigns seek to mobilise social resources and therefore go beyond mere awareness campaigns. They are also not reducible to those interventions listed in SHS and WG, which seek to stimulate social capital and cohesion. Thus they have been treated in their own section in this chapter.

Firstly, the intervention assumes that social cohesion and social capital are valuable resources in poverty reducing terms.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the strategy's social inclusion interventions are provided for poverty reducing purposes

Assumption 55: Social cohesion and social capital result in poverty reduction<sup>89</sup>

The intervention must also assume there to be a deficiency in these resources.

Assumption 56: There is a deficit of social cohesion and social capital that constrains poverty reduction.

In so far as social cohesion and social capital are being developed for social inclusion purposes, as characterised in the strategy (JHDS, 2005:103-109), it would also be assumed that exclusion is a constraint to poverty reduction.

Statement of Status: Necessary is social cohesion and social capital are generated to address social exclusion

Assumption 57: Social inclusion is of value for poverty reduction<sup>90</sup>

### **Concluding Statement**

This intervention highlights an existing deficiency in valuable resources, such as social cohesion and social capital. These resources are assumed to constrain poverty reduction. In so far as the strategy explicitly associates social cohesion interventions with social inclusion, exclusion can also be taken as a constraint to poverty reduction.

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<sup>89</sup> This assumption is contentious. The three concepts of social cohesion, social exclusion and social capital are often left very vague. The strategy presents them as interrelated, but it is not always clear exactly what the relationship is. Several theorists have questioned the legitimacy of these concepts, most specifically social capital (Adato et al, 2006; du Toit 2005). This is particularly true in relation to horizontal social capital, the form most predominately held amongst poor communities, as discussed in footnote 50.

<sup>90</sup> The overarching concept of social exclusion has been called into question. Where social exclusion is seen as the problem, then it is assumed that social inclusion is the solution. Bracking (2003) and du Toit (2004) both argue that this is an over-simplified understanding of the condition. They both suggest that the problem may not be exclusion but rather "adverse incorporation" (du Toit, 2004).

### 4.6.3 Urban Management Reforms

The JHDS recognises that several City-enforced bylaws and regulations have exacerbated poor people's experiences of poverty (B.3.1 in JHDS, 2005:100). The City proposes to re-evaluate their regulations in order to identify those that negatively affect the poor. The City will then adapt them accordingly. They also intend to improve the enforcement of the various regulations, particularly where this enforcement would improve the lives of the poor. The JHDS specifically mentions the need to reform by-laws when discussing the health-related processes required when authorising early childhood development facilities (B.2.1) as well as when discussing the creation of an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs in the informal economy (B.1.3).

The intervention is founded on the following claim:

**Key Claim (KC4.6.3):** The City will reform and enforce its bylaws and will thereby reduce poverty

Whether understood directly or indirectly, this claim entails two suppositions. The first relates to the constraints to poverty reduction, and the second to the possibility of reforming bylaws in poverty reducing ways.

This intervention posits the obstacles to escaping poverty as the result of a system of regulations. This is important in that it offers an alternative perspective on what constrains the poor from moving out of poverty, namely the nature of the structure in which individuals operate.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the strategy's urban management reforms are provided for poverty reducing purposes

**Assumption 58:** The City's current bylaws and the way they are enforced constrain poverty reduction

In addition, the claim assumes that reform for poverty reduction is possible. In reforming certain bylaws, and becoming increasingly vigilant in the policing of others, the City believes it can assist the poor. However, this assumes that an action can impact upon a diverse group of people in a similar, positive way. This implies that new reforms and

enforced bylaws are able to benefit some poor people in a way that does not disadvantage other poor people. In so far as the City hopes one action can assist the poor, it must also have assumed a degree of homogeneity in the way in which the poor experience bylaws.

Assumption 59: The City's bylaw can be reformed and enforced in such a way that advantages some or all poor people without disadvantaging others<sup>91</sup>

### **Concluding Statement**

The regulatory environment is characterised as a constraint to poverty reduction. The JHDS recognises existing bylaws and the enforcement of these bylaws as presenting a constraint to the poor in their efforts to escape poverty. The intervention posits a degree of homogeneity in the way in which these bylaw-related constraints are experienced.

#### **4.6.4 Partnerships**

The City proposes to reduce poverty through establishing relationships and partnerships between the stakeholders involved in the process of poverty reduction. There are various ways in which this could be interpreted. It is possible that such an intervention could effect a change in the power differentials between partners. A closer reading of the strategy indicates, however, that such a power transfer is not being sought directly. The proposal rather suggests interventions that intend to improve relationships and build partnerships by maintaining but expanding upon relationships as they are currently instantiated (JHDS, 2005:107-109).

Business support is enlisted, but predominately in so far as business plays a role in funding corporate social investments (JHDS, 2005:108). Civil society is called upon, but is conceptualised in terms of receiving either funding or other support from the City

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<sup>91</sup> Trade offs will have to be made, and these will not necessarily be to the advantage of all. A closer look at one of the strategy's listed examples illustrates this issue: the reforming of health bylaws in order to speed up the authorisation process for ECD facilities (JHDS, 2005:95). This could result in a greater number of legal facilities, to the benefit of facility owners, communities and those children not currently catered for by existing facilities. This could, however, come at the expense of compromising the health of the children.

(JHDS, 2005:107-108). This often serves to reduce civil society's autonomy and relegate them the role of service provider, rather than watch-dog (Kotze and Habib in Mhone and Edigheji, 2003; Fowler, 1991; Bratton, 1989). The strategy does not explicitly recognise or seek to enhance an oppositional role for non-government and community based organisations. The City does explicitly look at improving the lot of the poor by encouraging better official representation of their interests. It, however, assumes that this can be sufficiently done through existing democratic channels such as ward councilors and committees (JHDS, 2005:107). Significantly, the proposed interventions do not indicate that it would be necessary to actively provide the poor with new and significant powers in their relationships with the City, business or society.

The interventions proposed seem to aim to provide the poor with 'more-and-better-of-the-same' types of partnerships. In other words, the JHDS assumes that relationships need to be enhanced, but not fundamentally and radically changed in any way. This points to the following claim:

Key Claim (KC4.6.4): The JHDS seeks to reduce poverty through maintaining and expanding upon the existing relationships between the City, the poor and other stakeholders involved in the process of poverty reduction
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This assumes that the existing form of relationship is appropriate. Relationships constrain poverty in so far as they are not effective enough, and there are not enough of them.

Statement of Status: Necessary if the strategy's positive partnerships intervention is provided for poverty reducing purposes through creating 'more-and-better-of-the-same' types of partnerships

Assumption 60: Relationships constrain poverty in so far as they are not effective enough, and there are not enough of them

The implied assumption is that a significant change is not required in the way in which these relationships currently exist and operate.

Assumption 61: The existing form of relationship between the poor and stakeholders involved with poverty reduction is appropriate<sup>92</sup>

### **Concluding Statement**

Relationships are seen to constrain poverty reduction. However, this constraint relates to how many such partnerships exist and how effectively existing partnerships function. The JHDS assumes that relationships need to be enhanced, but not fundamentally and radically changed in any way. The form taken by existing relationships is thus not conceived as a constraint but is rather characterised as appropriate.

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<sup>92</sup> This has been debated in the literature. Several theorists argue that poverty is a product of the existing relationships between the state and the elite on the one hand and the poor on the other (Pogge, 2002; Moreira in Carr and Sloan, 2003; Bullock and Lott, 2001; Carr in Carr and Sloan, 2003; Alcock, 1997).



#### **4.7 Concluding Statement for the Chapter**

The logical argument analysis has highlighted a number of assumptions from within the strategy about what constrains poverty reduction. Asset-related constraints featured most prominently amongst the findings of the analyses. The strategy emphasised the issue of financial, human, physical and social capital deficiencies (financial: SS, PWP, IGP; human: PWP, IGP; physical: BHS, SHS, PWP; social: SHS, 4.6.2, 4.6.4).

A second important constraint recognised relates to the environment, including the regulatory environment, in which the poor operate. The strategy notes that this environment is not always conducive to poverty reduction (IGP, 4.6.3). Assumptions implicit in the SS and BHS interventions highlight the problem of access, in particular relating to the access poor people have to poverty reducing interventions (SS, BHS). In addition, several other constraints were noted including a lack of awareness (4.6.1), a deficiency in the number of and quality of partnerships for poverty reduction (4.6.4), and a lack of social cohesion associated with problems of social exclusion (4.6.2).

This set of constraints can be read as necessarily implicit within the strategy, subject to one's acceptance of the Good Faith approach employed in this dissertation. Yet, while the strategy necessarily entails this set of assumptions, it does not immediately indicate the status of these constraints. The constraints listed above could be either directly responsible for preventing poverty reduction or rather indirectly important. If these constraints are interpreted as indirectly or instrumentally important then a further set of underlying constraints to poverty reduction can be envisaged. In this case, the strategy generates a set of conditions that in turn are able to produce a reduction in poverty. The status of the assumed constraints highlighted above depends upon one's interpretation of the interventions.

Following from an interpretation based on the anticipated outcomes listed in the JHDS and other associated official documentation, this dissertation highlighted an additional set of underlying constraints. These include the constraints to poverty reduction presented by unemployment and unemployability (PWP, SS, IGP), vulnerability (BHS), a lack of growth (SHS), inaccessibility (SHS), and inappropriate desires and behaviours (4.6.1). While these assumed constraints are conditional on one's interpretation of the

interventions, during the next phase of analysis in this dissertation they will be treated in the same way as the necessary constraints listed above.

University of Cape Town

## **Chapter Five: Constructing the Conceptualisations**

Chapter five translates the list of assumptions from chapter four into a set of positions on the individualist-structuralist constraints spectrum discussed in chapter one. The first part of this chapter will look at the assumed constraints in order to identify the trends amongst these assumptions. It will also highlight those constraints that have been omitted from, or rejected by, the strategy's analysis of constraints. These will be identified with reference to a Sustainable Livelihoods framework. This framework will also be used as a mechanism for classifying the assumptions uncovered in chapter four. Having classified the assumptions according to this framework, the second part of the chapter will apply the resultant categories to the constraints spectrum. In this way, the strategy's underlying conceptualisation of constraints will be identified.

### **5.1 Identifying Trends and Gaps between Assumptions**

There are already several trends and patterns evident amongst the assumptions uncovered in chapter four. These will be systematically identified with reference to the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) to poverty developed by Conway and Chambers (1992; also discussed in Scoones, 1998; Carney, 1998; Moser, 1998; and Bebbington, 1999, Ashley and Carney, 1999). This framework will be used not only to classify the assumptions into a set of categories but also to show these trends in the context of missing and omitted conceptualisations of constraints.

It is important to stress that the SLA is not being ascribed to the assumptions. Rather the theory is being used as a tool through which to view the trends that already exist between the assumptions found in chapter four. The SLA has been chosen in particular in that it is an overarching framework that synthesises a number of theories on poverty including asset theories, capability approaches, as well as vulnerability and power related theories. It thus includes several of the most important views on poverty within one framework<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> This author recognises that, were another theory to have been employed, a different set of trends and gaps may have become apparent. Given the nature of the SLA theory, however, this author suggests that any differences would not be significant.

### 5.1.1 The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA)

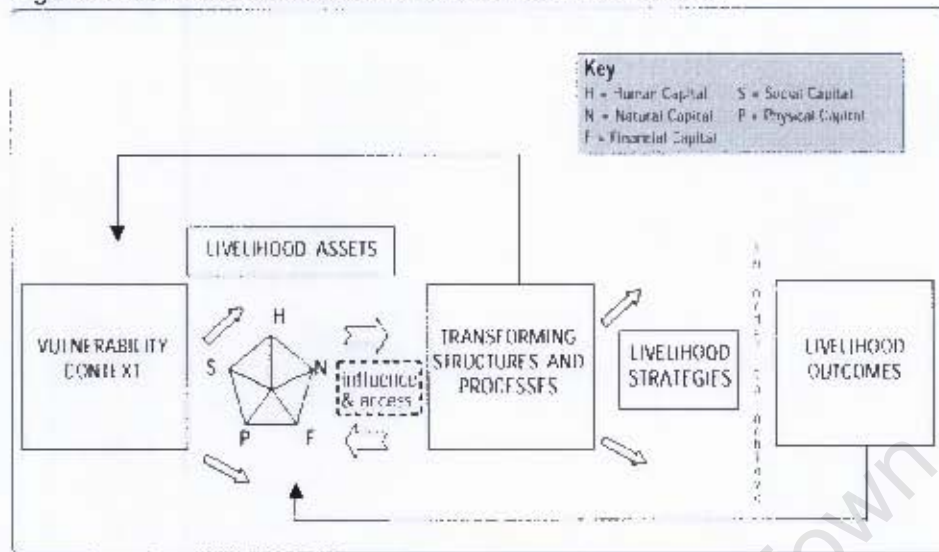
The SLA is a transdisciplinary framework on poverty, which was popularised by Chambers and Conway (1992) in their seminal text on Sustainable Rural Livelihoods. Subsequently, it has been discussed and developed by various theorists including Scoones (1998), Carney (1998), Moser (1998), and Bebbington (1999, also discussed in DFID, 1997; Start and Johnson, 2004). The DFID model, the version of the SLA to be used by this dissertation, incorporates the additions made to the framework by these theorists (DFID model discussed in Ashley and Carney, 1999; see figure three overleaf).

The SLA theory proposes that households have a set of livelihood goals. These are adopted because it is believed that they will result in the improved well being of the household. Households pursue these goals by devising livelihood strategies for how best to convert their various assets into their preferred livelihood goals. This conversion happens within a vulnerability context. The vulnerability context references governance, social, economic, demographic, technological, and resource trends amongst others<sup>94</sup>. There are also certain organisations, structures and processes that have an impact on the way in which the household can convert their assets into desired outcomes. These processes and organisations span across both public and private spheres and range from individual and household to international levels<sup>95</sup>. The vulnerability context and these so called transforming structures and processes can either assist or constrain the household's conversion capability. The asset base also serves as a constraint to the possible outcomes that a household can achieve (Chambers and Conway, 1992; Scoones, 1998; Carney, 1998; Moser, 1998; and Bebbington, 1999, Ashley and Carney, 1999).

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<sup>94</sup> The way in which households use their asset to improve their well being will be influenced by, for instance, conflict and war, an economic crisis or boom, health shocks including pandemics such as the HIV/AIDS crisis, and new technologies.

<sup>95</sup> For instance these include government policies, community structures and power relations relating to class, gender, race and age amongst others.

**Figure Three: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**





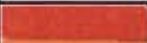

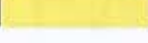
Source: DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets

### 5.1.2 Classifying Assumptions According to the SLA

This section of the chapter will look at the assumptions found in chapter four in terms of the SLA. This dissertation classifies assumptions according to a number of categories in order to identify the trends amongst assumptions. Five categories are derived from the SLA, namely assumptions positing constraints in terms of the vulnerability context, the livelihood assets, the transforming structures and processes, the livelihood strategies and the livelihood goals.

Viewing the JHDS in terms of the SLA framework enables one to see at a glance what conceptualisations have been used extensively in the strategy, and what notions have been rejected or omitted (See Table Four).

Table Four: Classifying Assumptions According to the SLA

SLA	Illustration of such a constraint	Constraints recognised in the JHDS	Evidence from the JHDS		Left out/ rejected	Evidence from the JHDS
Vulnerability Context	The poor are more vulnerable to economic, demographic, geographic trends					PWP, IGP, SS: Rejected the economy and the structure of the labour market as a constraint
Assets	The poor have fewer assets, possibly of a lower quality	Financial, physical, social and human capital	SS, PWP, IGP, BHS, SHS, 4.6.2			
Transforming Structures and Processes	The poor are disadvantaged and discriminated against	Bylaws Conducive environments Relationships cohesion and exclusion	4.6.3, IGP IGP, SHS, BHS 4.6.4, SHS	Other		
Livelihood Strategies	The poor have not matched their goals to their strategies correctly	Awareness campaigns Socialisation information	4.6.1 PWP	Other		
Livelihood Goals	The poor want the wrong things	Awareness campaigns	4.6.1	Other		
 Omitted from conceptualisation  Mentioned but not extensively  Rejected						

In categorising assumptions according to the SLA, it becomes clear that the strategy has primarily conceptualised constraints in asset terms. All of the six interventions highlighted some capital deficit, be it financial (assumptions 2, 19 and 30), human (assumptions 14, 16 and 29), physical (assumptions 14, 15, 38 and 46) or social (assumptions 14 and 48). Natural capital deficiencies are not mentioned. Perhaps this is a result of their being addressed in the City's Environmental Management Framework. Nevertheless this is an important omission, especially given the new field of sustainable development and the growing awareness of the impact of global

warming and peak oil on the poor (Heinberg, 2004, 2003; Brown, 2006; Simms et al, 2005).

While the majority of assumed constraints are asset related, the strategy also recognises a number of non-asset constraints to poverty reduction. Several interventions can be categorised as positing constraints in terms of the livelihood goals and livelihood strategies of the poor. Such interventions provide assistance to the poor based on their perceived inability to both formulate appropriate goals and devise successful strategies to attain these goals. These constraints are entailed within the assumptions underpinning the PWP's socialisation training intervention, as well as the assumptions implicit in both the demand-related and behaviour-related awareness interventions (PWP, 4.1; assumptions 18 and 52-54).

Several other assumptions focus on the environment in which the poor operate as posing the major constraints to escaping poverty. It was noted that certain bylaws are obstacles to poverty reduction (interventions 4.6.3 and IGP, assumptions 58 and 31, respectively). The acknowledgement that the regulatory environment constrains poverty is associated with a further set of assumptions about conducive environments. The strategy notes that the poor operate in environments not conducive to poverty reducing actions, such as establishing and growing informal enterprises, or generating human capital (IGP, BHS, SHS; assumptions 31, 48 and 39, respectively). These assumptions indicate an awareness of obstacles that are beyond the control of the poor. In terms of the bylaws, there is even a concession that the government is responsible for constraining poverty reduction to some extent. These assumptions can thus be understood in terms of the SLA's transforming structures and processes.

A number of other assumptions could also be classified according to the SLA's 'transforming structures and processes' category. There was a call for more positive partnerships between the poor and other stakeholders (4.6.4; assumption 60). In so far as this intervention tries to change the way in which others relate to the poor, it is possible that the strategy recognises a relational constraint placed on the poor. However, the analysis shows the strategy to have understood the intervention as replicating and perpetuating existing relations as opposed to seeking fundamental changes for the poor in power terms.

There was also mention of the need to reform relationships amongst the poor themselves in order to create a sense of cohesion (4.6.2 and SHS; assumptions 47, 55-57). Cohesion related assumptions have also been associated with the recognition of social exclusion as an obstacle to moving out of poverty. Such exclusion could point to a form of discrimination. This would be true if societal norms or political regulations were to result in the exclusion of some and the inclusion of others.

While these examples show that the strategy has recognised transforming structures and processes as constraints, SLA theory also describes several other types of constraint presented by such structures and processes. These were not acknowledged by the strategy. For instance the strategy does not explicitly note the constraints presented by societal structures, community beliefs or culture. It has also not recognised the obstacle presented by discrimination especially in terms of factors such as race and class<sup>96</sup>. In fact, the assumptions uncovered in chapter four seem to indicate that the analysis of poverty was not informed by a class analysis at all. The strategy views poverty as an isolated condition and not one best understood in relation to other conditions, such as wealth.

The lack of any extensive power-infused class analysis is an important omission especially in so far as there is a growing shift toward understanding poverty in these terms in the literature, both academic and official. The World Bank, for instance, has cast poverty reduction in empowerment terms in their World Development Report 2000/2001. Similarly, it has become popular for academics to argue for an understanding of poverty in relational, power terms, in particular with regards to the relationship between wealth and poverty (Pogge, 2002; Moreira in Carr and Sloan, 2003; Bullock and Lott, 2001; Carr in Carr and Sloan, 2003; Alcock, 1997).

Another important omission in the strategy relates to the SLA's fifth and remaining category: the vulnerability context. The analysis shows the strategy to have either ignored or rejected the vulnerability context as a constraint. Several interventions in chapter four were argued to entail assumptions about the nature of unemployment and the nature of the economy (PWP, IGP, SS; assumptions 13, 23-26 and 36-37). These rejected the notion that the economy and the labour market were constraints to poverty reduction. Other trends classified under the SLA's vulnerability context

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<sup>96</sup> If one looks at the targeting of certain of the interventions it is possible to understand the strategy as recognising age and gender related discrimination.



were ignored in the strategy's analysis of constraints. Poverty was not discussed in terms of economic trends such as globalisation and trade liberalisation. Nor was it understood in terms of climatic, demographic, health-related or technological trends.

The classification undertaken in this chapter highlights an interesting trend relating to the 'Other' interventions (4.6). The majority of assumptions recognising non-asset related constraints were associated with 'Other' interventions. This includes both those constraints around livelihood goals and strategies and those constraints highlighting transforming structures and processes. This is interesting in that those interventions most likely to be fundamentally different from the dominant asset related perspective, are also those least likely to be recognised as poverty reduction projects, at least by the Public Service Commission (see chapter three for more on the PSC and its classifications).

While this classification has categorised assumptions into four of the SLA's five categories, it has not pursued any further disaggregation within these categories. Yet when one looks more closely at the asset constraints, an additional trend can be identified. The analysis has shown the strategy to have interpreted three of the interventions in employment terms (PWP, IGP, SS). These asset-producing interventions are conceptualised as instrumentally important for their role in generating or facilitating employment opportunities (assumptions 12-13, 20-22 and 29).

In addition, there is a set of asset-related assumptions that focus on physical capital constraints (BHS, SHS). Physical capital has been highlighted as not only a direct but also an indirect constraint to poverty reduction. It has been associated with a further set of constraints including those presented by vulnerability, a lack of growth and inaccessibility. It has also posited social cohesion, conducive environments and other forms of capital as important constraints to poverty reduction (assumptions 39, 47 and 49).

## **5.2 The Underlying Conceptualisations of Constraints**

The SLA has highlighted four categories of assumptions about constraints, namely livelihood assets, livelihood strategies, livelihood goals and transforming structures and processes. In addition, the asset set can be divided into two further groups, an employment-focused group and a physical capital group of asset-related

assumptions. These five groups of assumptions can be applied to the constraints spectrum.

An individualist explanation has been employed where the JHDS understands livelihood strategies and goals to be the key constraints to poverty reduction. Here constraints are explained with reference to individual deviances or deficiencies. In response the strategy has seen it appropriate to provide assistance to the poor by helping them change their goals and strategies. Once the poor have realigned their strategies and adjusted their goals, it is thought that the poor will move out of poverty. This is interesting: on the one hand it seems to blame the poor for not escaping their condition, but on the other hand posits them as agents of their own change.

At the other end of the spectrum a more structural explanation is seen to inform the analysis of constraints as transforming processes and structures. These constraints are external to the poor and are often out of their direct control. Here the government, amongst others, is responsible for changing the external environment in order to allow the poor an improved chance at poverty reduction.

The majority of assumptions about constraints are asset related. An asset constraint could be characterised as pointing to either individual or structural positions on the constraints spectrum. It depends on how the asset intervention is interpreted. It has been argued that a number of the assets are provided for employment purposes. An employment constraint could also be viewed as either individual or structural. However where assets, and in particular financial and human assets, are thought to constrain employment, the constraint is cast in individual terms. This is supported by the fact that several assumptions have rejected structural explanations of unemployment.

Physical capital interventions must also be viewed according to the spectrum. The assumptions informing these interventions focus on how physical capital overcomes the constraints presented by non-conducive environments, vulnerability and a lack of social cohesion, economic growth, capital accumulation and accessibility. These various constraints are mostly structural in nature, where the constraint is beyond the control of the individual poor person. It is, however, also possible to interpret several of these constraints in individual or family/community/culture terms. For example, if basic household services are provided with a view to developing human capital and

thereby addressing unemployment, then the key constraint is once again individual. Physical capital interventions can therefore be seen as tending toward a structural notion of constraint, but also as able to accommodate individual conceptualisations.

### **Concluding Statement**

This chapter has reconstructed the strategy's conceptualisation by classifying the assumptions uncovered in chapter four into five categories and applying these categories to the constraints spectrum. Two of the major constraints recognised are asset related. Asset constraints are generally formulated in either employment or physical capital terms. This dissertation argues that employment-related asset constraints can be seen as explaining constraints in individual terms. Constraints highlighted by physical capital interventions generally tend toward structural explanations but could also be interpreted as positing individual constraints.

There are also a small number of non-asset related explanations. These point to constraints resulting from transforming structures and processes on the structural side of the spectrum, and from the household's livelihood strategies and goals on the individual side. Interestingly, many of these non-asset constraints come in the form of interventions less likely to have been classified as poverty reducing, at least by the Public Service Commission's audit and the government views presented therein.

Several constraints are not recognised by the strategy. It has been argued that assumptions indicate the strategy to have rejected the notion that the economy and the labour market present a constraint to poverty reduction. A significant number of other constraints are ignored including those presented by the vulnerability context as well as several power-related social and political factors within the SLA's transforming structures and processes category.

The overarching conceptualisations of constraints entailed within the strategy recognise both individual and structural constraints. The weighting of the conceptualisation tends toward individual explanations, in particular because employment related asset constraints have been interpreted as positing individual constraints. This proposed emphasis is further supported by the fact that most omitted conceptualisations of constraints are structural in nature.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

This dissertation asked the research question: “How does the Johannesburg Human Development Strategy conceptualise the constraints that exist to escaping poverty?”

It answered the question by adopting a critical approach to the analysis. Using a logical argument analysis methodology, the dissertation was able to ascertain what assumptions about constraints to poverty reduction were implicit within the strategy. The dissertation used these assumptions to locate the strategy on the spectrum of explanations for what constrains poverty reduction, ranging from individualist to structuralist positions. This chapter will conclude the dissertation by summarising the outcomes of the analysis. It will also indicate what further studies could be undertaken given the approach suggested.

### **6.1 Outcomes of the Analysis**

The strategy emphasised livelihood asset deficiencies as presenting the most significant constraint to poverty reduction. Several non-asset constraints were also recognised, including inappropriate livelihood goals and strategies on the one hand and inhibitive structures and processes on the other. These non-asset assumptions were generally associated with interventions not recognised by the government as poverty reducing.

With reference to the constraints spectrum, the strategy is cognisant of both individualist and structuralist explanations of constraints to poverty reduction. It recognised individual constraints including those presented by the livelihood goals and strategies of the poor, as well as those entailed within an employment-related set of asset assumptions. Structural constraints include those presented by transforming structures and processes, as well as many of the deficiencies associated with physical capital interventions.

By classifying assumptions according to the Sustainable Livelihoods framework, it was also shown that the JHDS ignored a large number of possible constraints, where these were primarily constraints from the structural side of the spectrum. For instance, the strategy was silent on possible constraints captured by the SLA's vulnerability context, as well as those entailed within political, social and community practices. One of the interesting observations of the analysis was that the strategy did not make any

references to poverty in the context of a broader class analysis. Not only were several structural constraints omitted from the analysis, other economy-related structural explanations were rejected.

The analysis found the strategy to emphasise individual explanations of poverty reduction constraints over structural explanations. The fact that the weighting tends toward an individualist explanation is interesting for three reasons. Firstly, this finding is in keeping with the rhetoric around a 'culture of dependency' championed by President Thabo Mbeki, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and the Department of Social Development (discussed in Gumede, 2005; Desai, 2005; DoSD, 2007). Secondly, this relatively conservative view of poverty has generally been frowned upon in much of the contemporary academic literature. Thirdly, it seems to be counterintuitive given the structural causes of poverty in South Africa. These structural causes of poverty are associated both with the racialised and spatialised distribution systems that were prevalent during apartheid, and with the arguably 'pro-rich' economic distribution systems of post apartheid South Africa (evidenced by both a growing poverty and inequality gap and by the worsening poverty experienced in post-apartheid South Africa; discussed in Leibbrandt et al, 2004; May and Carter, 2001; Desai, 2005).

The analysis highlighted two additional points of interest. Firstly, the JHDS made no reference to the costs of interventions to the poor. A recognition of such costs would not necessarily have cast new light on what constrains poverty reduction. It would, however, have added a new dimension to issues around the magnitude of these constraints. Secondly, the author highlighted a significant number of assumptions made by the strategy as arguably contentious. The accuracy of these assumptions was not tested in this thesis. Such tests could, however, become the focus of further studies.

## **6.2 Issues for Further Study**

This dissertation sought to classify the strategy's implicit assumptions according to a constraints spectrum. There are also a number of other ways in which the findings of this analysis could be used. The assumptions uncovered could provide the basis for a set of evaluations of the strategy. For example, assumptions could be tested against reality to evaluate whether the strategy is based on a founded diagnosis of the condition of

poverty or not. Such an evaluation would be valuable in so far as one accepts the role of assumptions in affecting the choice of intervention pursued, and consequently the impact of its action. The assumptions could also be used as a means of evaluating the strategy in an indirect way. This form of evaluation refers to assumptions in so far as they can be used to question the effectiveness of the intervention. Even where the assumptions are shown to be founded, it can be argued that the constraints uncovered are better addressed through another type of intervention<sup>97</sup>.

It would need to be remembered that the outcomes of such evaluations would remain subject to one's acceptance of the dissertation's Good Faith Approach. It is in the nature of this approach that any conclusion reached would remain conditional on one's acceptance of the poverty reduction objective of the intervention. If an assumption were shown to be unfounded, for instance, then this finding may either indicate a fault in the diagnosis informing the strategy or it may highlight a misunderstanding of the objective of the strategy. The Good Faith approach thus limits the ability of evaluations to be conclusive. While recognising this limitation, the author still feels the approach to be valuable for evaluation purposes. The approach has the potential to force a more frank and honest discussion about the objectives of our interventions, especially where officials are presented with a dilemma. It is also able to begin a debate about the true extent of our incidence reducing poverty strategy.

One of the ways in which such an objective-related conversation could be initiated is through a critical discourse analysis. Discourse analysis could be used to explain both why the strategy employed a certain conceptualisation, as well as to what effect. The outcomes of this dissertation could be used as a first step toward such a comprehensive discourse analysis.

The objective of the strategy could also be investigated further by repeating the logical argument analysis but with reference to a different assumed objective. By repeating the analysis in this way, it would be possible to see whether the strategy is not better understood in terms of a different set of objectives. Each new iteration of the exercise could replace the suppositional assumption of 'poverty reduction' with a different

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<sup>97</sup> By means of analogy, such an evaluation would identify a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, from a prescription of Dr. Rath's 'special' pills. It would, however, critique the prescription by arguing it not to be the most effective way in which to address the diagnosed problem.

objective. For instance, it may be worth reviewing the way in which this dissertation defined human development in poverty terms. It would be interesting to see whether the interventions and their implicit assumptions are better characterised as seeking a form of human development not necessary reduced to poverty reduction. A different set of assumptions would be generated were one to repeat the analysis with this new approach to human development in mind<sup>98</sup>. Alternatively, one could replace the 'poverty reduction' assumption with another suppositional assumption such as 'poverty alleviation', 'poverty management', or even 'the promotion of wealth amongst middle and upper classes'. It would be interesting to see whether these different analyses produced a set of assumptions more plausible, founded or coherent.

Highlighting the implicit assumptions within a document also enables one to compare implicit and explicit conceptualisations. Such a comparison would allow for an evaluation of the rhetoric employed in the strategy. In addition, it would be interesting to see how accurately a document represents the theories on which it claims to be based both from the perspective of its implicit and its explicit conceptualisations.

In addition, the approach adopted in this dissertation could be employed for purposes not associated with evaluation. For instance, if one's assumptions about constraints to poverty reduction were made explicit in the initial phases of policy formulation, then the policymaking process is likely to result in the design of better interventions. Thus the approach may be adopted in building strategies in addition to evaluating them (also discussed in Mitroff and Emshoff, 1979; Dunn in Fischer and Forester, 1993).

### **Concluding Statement**

This dissertation demonstrates that the proposed critical argument analysis approach is able to highlight the construction of poverty reduction constraints informing the JHDS. The author also argues in the conclusion that the approach could be useful for a number of reasons beyond such conceptualisation exercises. The approach lends itself to an evaluation of social interventions. It could also be used during policy formulation and

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<sup>98</sup> Comparing the findings of such an analysis with this dissertation's findings may highlight some interesting disparities or similarities. Such a comparison could highlight a need to review this dissertation's treatment of the two concepts.

review processes. By asking critical and logical questions about the assumptions informing our interventions, it is suggested that better interventions would be produced.

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“And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself,  
and to one another, and to God”  
Kahlil Gibran

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